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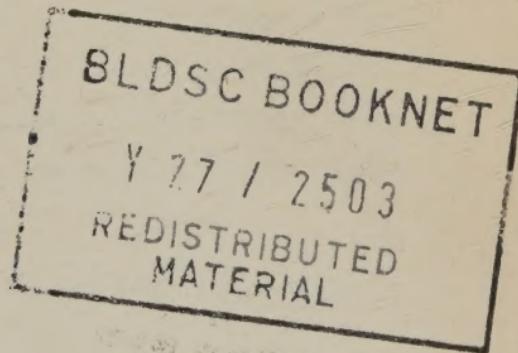
THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

BY

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etc., etc.



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PREFACE

THIS essay traverses some of the ground covered by Edwards's *Lives of the Founders of the British Museum*, and the Reading-room manuals of Sims and Nichols, all long out of print. But it has its own field, and adds a little here and there, I venture to hope, to the published history of our national library. It is not intended as a guide to the Reading-room. Lists of some of the official catalogues and other publications that form so distinguished a part of the work of the British Museum are appended for the convenience of students in general. The bibliography indicates the main sources to which I am indebted for material.

GERTRUDE BURFORD RAWLINGS.



WITHDRAWN

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

I

STEPS TOWARDS A NATIONAL LIBRARY

OUR first libraries were those in the churches and religious houses. Out of the darkness shrouding the history of the early Church in Britain comes a story that Elvanus, second of the legendary archbishops of London, built a library adjoining St Peter's, Cornhill, though since Elvanus himself is but a doubtful entity we are not allowed to believe the pleasing tradition. Probably the first library of historic times in this country was that at Canterbury, said to have begun with nine books brought from Rome by St Augustine (597-604). Archbishop Egbert (732-766) founded a library at York, and sooner or later every monastery throughout the country had its own collection of books of divinity, law, history and the classics.

The value of these libraries as safe and suitable

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repositories for important documents was recognised by the State. In days when there was no printing, and when there were no newspapers, the only way of making known decrees and charters, and of securing their preservation, was to deposit copies not only in the archives of the Tower of London or of the Palace or chapter-house at Westminster, but with the monasteries as well. Thus, contemporary copies of Magna Charta have been found in some of the monastic libraries which escaped the perils of the Dissolution. Edward I. ordered copies of documents relating to Scotland to be committed to the care of certain abbeys, and, on the other hand, for evidences of his title as Chief Lord of Scotland, and for information as to the rights of the King of England as against Papal aggression, it was in the monastic libraries that he caused search to be made.

But the monasteries were not only the repositories of old books and special records ; they multiplied and propagated texts of the Holy Scriptures and of classical and patristic works. The writing-room or scriptorium was an important feature of many religious houses, and the monks did literature good service by making copies of the manuscripts under their care ; and not literature alone, but art as well, for the sacred and devotional books in particular were often written out and decorated with a consummate skill unrivalled by any modern handiwork.

During the Middle Ages there was no popular

demand for books. Books were very costly, being all in manuscript ; reading was a rare accomplishment, and for a public library, as we understand the term to-day, the time was not ripe. Religious communities lent books to each other, and no doubt afforded all the help they could to students. To open one's books to genuine seekers after knowledge was accounted a duty, and St Columba quite rightly, according to the notion of his times, laid a curse on the books of the churlish Longarad when the owner refused him a sight of them. But sometimes, to avoid risk of loss, a donor of books who wished to safeguard his gift would have it placed under anathema, so that the volumes could not be lent to anyone under pain of excommunication for the lenders. In 1212, however, the Council of Paris formally condemned this practice, and annulled the anathemas. It was held that even the owner of a book was not at liberty to hinder the diffusion of its store of learning.

Richard de Bury (1281-1345), that most famous of book-lovers, collected books in the first place for pure love of them, and in the second because of his cherished plan of founding a Hall at Oxford and of endowing it not only with funds, but with his books. In *Philobiblon* he lays down the rules which were to be observed in the use of these books, and safeguards against their loss. No book was to be copied or transcribed outside the house ; no book was to be lent out unless the library contained a duplicate ;

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and for any book lent, a pledge of greater value was to be deposited. The recipients of books were to swear that they would use them for no other purpose but that of inspection or study, and that they would not take them beyond the town and suburbs of Oxford. The fate of the Bishop's collection, however, is somewhat uncertain.

The executors of Richard Whittington, Lord Mayor of London (died *c.* 1422), who in his lifetime helped to found the library of the Grey Friars in London, bore half the charges of building the library of the old chapel or college of the Guildhall, which was destroyed *c.* 1549. Although since 1873 the modern Guildhall Library has been open to the general public, the use of the former collection was restricted to divinity students.

The monastic and collegiate libraries constituted a national treasure, though in practically private hands, but at the Dissolution much of this treasure was utterly wasted. Numbers of books were ruthlessly destroyed, or sold for an old song and put to the basest uses. They were sent abroad by shiploads. The antiquary, Bale, knew a merchant who bought "two whole libraries" for forty shillings, merely as and for waste paper. Church-service books suffered particularly, as they were deemed idolatrous and superstitious relics, and were specifically assigned to destruction in order that they might not hinder the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer. The Museum library possesses the original

letter of Edward VI. and his Council to the bishops, ordering them to "collect and deface and abolish" all the old Church books. Among other damage done by the fanatical zeal of the royal commissioners at this time was the total annihilation of the library of Oxford University.

This wanton and wholesale destruction of books was a grief to the enlightened, and the sight of the savagery with which precious manuscripts were treated brought home to more than one mind the need of rescuing as many as possible and of a place where such things might be stored and kept for ever in safety. Archbishop Parker was especially active in causing search to be made for books, with a view to their preservation ; his agents worked all over the country ; and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, ultimately benefited by the collections which he bequeathed to it at his death. In addition to buying wherever he could, he obtained authority from the Privy Council to borrow, for study and transcription, any records or old documents which were in private hands.

The first proposal on record for the establishment of a national library was made in 1556 by John Dee, the scientist and astrologer, who himself had gathered a fine collection of books in his house at Mortlake. He presented to Queen Mary a "Supplication" for the recovery and preservation of ancient writings and monuments, and showed that "among the exceeding most lamentable displeasures that

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have of late happened to the Realm, through the subverting of the Religious Houses, not the least calamity is the spoliation of so many notable libraries." He thought that much might be saved if the work of salvation were set about at once, and prayed the Queen to order "the recovery of such worthy monuments as are yet extant, so that the Queen should have a most notable library, the passing excellent works of our forefathers be preserved from rot and worms, and the whole realm use and enjoy the whole incomparable treasure. . . . In the erecting of this your Library Royal, your Grace shall follow the footsteps of all the famous and godly Princes of old time." Dee proposed that a royal commission should be appointed to search for books all over the country, and that speedily, before the owners got wind of what was afoot and secreted their treasures, "which nevertheless," he says, "were very ungodly done, and a certain token that such are not sincere lovers of good learning." The books, when found, were to be taken away and copied, and returned to the owners afterwards if the owners wished. We can read between the lines the hope that they would not wish. He also suggested that all the famous books of foreign libraries should be transcribed. As some of the noblest libraries beyond the sea he instances those of the Vatican and of St Mark's, Venice, and those at Bologna, Florence and Vienna.

The Supplication, however, was not heard.

In the following reign, a petition was drafted by Robert Cotton, John Doddrige and James Lee, urging upon Queen Elizabeth the desirability of preserving "the books, original charters, and monuments of this realm," in a library to be erected in some convenient spot, either in "some convenient room in the Savoy Hospital which may well be spared," or in the lately dissolved monastery of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell, or elsewhere as the Queen might choose. This library was to be called the Library of Queen Elizabeth, and was to be under the direction of a corporation styled "The Academy for the Study of Antiquity and History founded by Queen Elizabeth." It was proposed, too, that the Queen should contribute towards this institution books from the royal collection concerning history and antiquities. It was also well pointed out that treatises published by authority on public matters, and proclamations, soon became very rare, because there was no place where they might be preserved.

It does not appear that this petition was ever presented. The copy in the British Museum (Cotton MS. Faustina E.v.) is a rough draft only, with erasures, and the names at the foot are in one hand and not autograph signatures. The document proves, however, that the idea of a national library was alive in the minds of some of the scholars of the day, and it continued to grow, and at last bore fruit. We shall hear of Robert Cotton again. But, in accordance with English habit, the scheme had to

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be worked out by individual enterprise and set well in motion before the State saw fit to countenance it.

Dr Richard Bentley, Royal Librarian under William III., Anne, George I. and George II., also thought of a national public library. Like the Commonwealth Parliament, he looked upon the Royal Library at St James's, consisting chiefly of books gathered by Henry VII. and his successors, as intended for the public benefit, and in 1697 he brought forward "A Proposal for Building a Royal Library and Establishing it by Act of Parliament." He pointed out the want of care and accommodation at St James's for the library, once so flourishing, now so neglected. There had been no supply of books from abroad for sixty years; there was no allowance for binding, so that many valuable manuscripts were spoiled for want of covers; and over a thousand books printed in England and brought in quires to the library, under the Act for the Regulation of Printing, were lying unbound and useless. He suggested that the King should give a corner on the south side of St James's Park for a site for the new building, and a house for the Keeper, approached by a coachway from Tuttle Street, Westminster, and that the library should be subsidised by Parliament. But, again, nothing was done.

It was most probably at Bentley's instigation that the Royal Library was sent, in 1708, to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Cottonian, and the

dream of uniting the two in one national collection may have prompted the idea.

About 1707 there was some talk of uniting the Royal and Cottonian libraries and the Library of the Royal Society, but nothing came of it.

Carte, the historian, pointed out some years later that there was no great city so ill provided with public libraries as London. He considered that a library might well form part of the Mansion House, then in course of erection. The Harleian manuscripts were at that time in the market, and could probably be bought for £20,000, and he proposed that the twelve rich City Companies should each contribute £2000 towards the purchase. The manuscripts would form a valuable nucleus, and the surplus of £4000 could go towards buying printed books.¹

The first modern library of note in England was founded at Oxford by Sir Thomas Bodley, to replace the old University Library destroyed by Edward VI.'s commissioners. It was named after its founder, and opened in 1602 with the benediction of all book-lovers. The King enriched it with volumes from his own collection, Sir Robert Cotton gave it of his treasures, and the Company of Stationers undertook to present it with a copy of every book printed by members of the Company. This last was a particularly valuable concession, for the Company of Stationers then possessed the entire monopoly of

¹ Sloane MS. 4254.

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English printing. Moreover, what the Company then granted as a privilege became later a legal right, and to this day the Bodleian Library is by law entitled to receive a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom.

In 1684 Archbishop Tenison built and endowed a public library in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields for the use of the clergy of Westminster. Dr Thomas Bray, a philanthropic divine, and author of *Bibliotheca Parochialis*, 1697, was instrumental in establishing eighty parochial libraries in places where the clergy could not afford to supply themselves with the books necessary for their studies, and by his efforts an Act was passed in 1708 "For the Better Preservation of Parochial Libraries." Some of his libraries still exist, under the care of the Associates of Dr Bray.

These were small attempts to supply a great want. Yet a national library, owned by the nation, accessible to the nation, and worthy of the nation, was approaching, but, like most important results, it was to be brought about by a collocation of circumstances rather than by a single stroke of genius or the execution of one spontaneous plan.

II

THE COTTONIAN LIBRARY

To Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1570-1631), antiquary and historian, we owe the nucleus and one of the chief glories of the national library.

He was educated at Westminster School, where Camden was a master, and at the age of eighteen he began to collect manuscripts with a view to writing a history of England. The history was never completed, but Cotton has left behind him a number of separate treatises on historical subjects. He was intimate with all the scholars and antiquaries of his time, and enjoyed opportunities of intercourse with officers of State—opportunities which he made the most of to acquire or “convey” many official documents of extraordinary interest, such as to-day would be strictly preserved in the public departments to which they belong, but were then not highly enough valued and therefore not well enough guarded to be beyond the reach of an eager and discriminating collector. It would be going too far, no doubt, to accuse Cotton of stealing, but it is true that his passion for old documents was so strong that even when he had merely borrowed them he was extremely reluctant to return them. Certainly,

had he been hampered by fine scruples he would have been a less strikingly successful collector. But it may well be believed that while indulging his beloved hobby he had a wider purpose in view. He was alive, as we have seen, to the need for a national public library for the preservation of ancient records ; he was one of the benefactors of the Bodleian Library ; he was aware of the negligence of government officers, and it may be that he planned to do privately, for his country's benefit, what would never have been initiated by any public movement. It seems certain that he intended his collection to become national property. It is also not to be doubted that by his passion for collecting many manuscripts were preserved which would otherwise have been lost or destroyed.

His methods annoyed Sir Thomas Wilson, the Keeper of the Records, who, when the death of Arthur Agarde left vacant the post of Keeper of the Exchequer Records, declared that it would be dangerous to the State " if Sir Robert Cotton, who will strive for it, succeed to put in a person devoted to him. He already injures the Keepers of State Papers by having such things as he hath coningly scraped together." Nevertheless, when Cotton applied, through Wilson, for the " subscriptions and signatures of Princes and great men, attached to letters otherwise unimportant, as he was collecting such for curiosity's sake," James I. gave orders that his request was to be granted.

But Cotton was not regarded by his contemporaries merely as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. He was respected as a high authority on English constitutional affairs, and on questions of precedent he was consulted as a matter of course. Thus, in 1615, Chamberlain stated that the question of the right of Lord Roos to carry the sword before the King had been settled by Sir Robert Cotton, "who has ever some old precedent in store."

James I. had great confidence in Cotton's judgment. He forbade the publication of the first part of Camden's *Life of Queen Elizabeth* till Cotton had reviewed it, and ordered that the second part was to be reviewed by himself and by Cotton too. He also stopped the publication of Camden's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots* till Cotton had enlarged it "and made it more authentic from two more ample histories which have come out, one in French and one in English." Cotton was one of the first on whom James conferred the new dignity of a baronetcy.

In 1626 Cotton was one of the commissioners appointed "to ascertain the facts respecting the placing and removal of the mark-stone on Tower Hill," as well as a member of the committee to inquire into some alleged abuses in the navy. And about the same time, when some parliamentary precedents had to be searched out, it was taken for granted that while the Attorney-General would easily give satisfaction for the precedents in the Star Chamber, Sir Robert Cotton would do the same "for the

precedent aforesaid in Edward III.'s time," and this notwithstanding that Cotton held no official position.

Moreover, historians and antiquaries both at home and abroad were deeply indebted to Cotton's matchless collection of ancient and mediæval documents, and to his generosity in placing it at the service of students. Among these students were Camden, Dugdale, Bacon, Speed and, no doubt, many lesser lights. Officers of State, too, were often glad to have access to Cotton's library. In that library, says Fuller, "are contained many Privaties of Princes and Transactions of State, insomuch that I have been informed, that the Fountains have been fain to fetch Water from the stream, and the Secretaries of State, and Clerks of the Council, glad from hence to borrow back again many Originals which, being lost by casualty or neglect of Officers, have here been recovered or preserved."

In October, 1615, Cotton was accused of having communicated State secrets to the Spanish Ambassador, and in December of the same year he was imprisoned. After six months' confinement he was released and pardoned, a privilege for which he had to pay £500. Towards the end of 1629 he found himself in trouble again, this time on account of "a pestilent tractate which he had fostered as his child," and circulated, it was alleged, among his friends. It contained "a Project how a Prince may make himself an absolute tyrant," and was designed "to bridle the impertinency of Parliament."

This tract, so out of harmony with the temper of the time, had been written in Italy by Sir Robert Dudley and sent to England in the time of King James. It had lain forgotten in the Cotton Library until the librarian, who is said to have let out his employer's books for his own profit, by some evil chance let this out also. It was copied and passed from hand to hand until Sir Thomas Wentworth heard of it. He traced it back to Cotton, and Cotton was arrested. His library and studies were sealed up, and he was not allowed access to them save in the presence of a clerk of the Council. A perpetual guard was set on his house in Westminster.

The King had the "Project" read over in Council, and Archbishop Harsnet declared he had never heard a more "pernicious, diabolical device." Cotton was kept under arrest till May, 1630, and on 29th May was tried in the Star Chamber, together with the Earls of Bedford, Somerset, and Clare, John Selden and Gilbert Barrell, for circulating the "Project" in question. While the trial was proceeding, command was received from the King that it was to be stopped, because of his joy at the birth of a son. "Upon which the said Writing was ordered to be burnt as Seditious and Scandalous; and the Proceedings were taken off the File." The details of the story are not clear, and it is probable that the pamphlet was made a pretext by Cotton's political enemy, Buckingham, to do him injury. It is certain that Buckingham instigated the seizure of the library.

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But though the Star Chamber proceedings had been dropped, Cotton remained under a cloud. A few weeks later, Mr Secretary Coke was ordered to see what records and State papers in the custody of Sir Robert Cotton properly belonged to the King. The library was still under seal, and Sir Robert and his son, petitioning that it might be restored to them, pleaded that the books occupied the best rooms of the house, and were perishing for want of airing. But the King paid no heed, and Sir Robert fell ill of grief. He told his friend, Sir Symonds D'Ewes, "that they had broken his heart that had locked up his library from him," and D'Ewes reported that grief had so marked him that his once ruddy face "was wholly changed into a grim, blackish paleness, near to the resemblance and hue of a dead visage."

Cotton never saw his library again. He died in 1631, at his house in Westminster, and on his decease his son Thomas renewed his father's petition to the King. Charles I. had commanded a certain Mr Boswell to make a catalogue of the manuscripts, but after he had begun the work Boswell was removed to some other employment. Sir Thomas therefore prayed for the restitution of his library. In 1633 he presented a third petition, submitting that his study, the best room in the house, had been long locked up, and himself debarred from its use, by order of the Privy Council, until the catalogue was made by which it would be seen whether the collection contained any records or papers properly belonging to the King.

The catalogue had been finished in the previous summer by Mr Dickinson, and apparently nothing had been discovered to which Sir Thomas's right was disputed.

About this time there was some danger that the Cotton collection might be bought for the Vatican Library, "but blessed be God," says Fuller, "the project did miscarry, to the honour of our Nation, and advantage of the Protestant Religion."

Stukely states that in the time of the Commonwealth, about the year 1650, the Cotton Library was at Stratton in Bedfordshire, and preserved by Bromhall, High Sheriff of the county, from plunder, the constitutional and legal evidence it contained being dangerous to its existence in those iconoclastic days. Sir Thomas Cotton, marrying for the second time, wedded the widow of a gentleman of Stratton, and his son John married the same gentleman's daughter. No doubt, therefore, the library was sent thither by Sir Thomas himself. When the danger was past, the famous collection came back to its proper home at Cotton House, Westminster.

Cotton House was situated within the precincts of the old Palace of Westminster, midway between St Stephen's Chapel and the Painted Chamber. It had gardens running down to the river, and a water gate. In 1648 Charles I. was brought by water from Whitehall, "guarded with Musqueteers in Boats to Sir Robert Cotton's House near Westminster Hall, and from thence to the Bar of the Court," and as often

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as the Court adjourned he was taken back to Cotton House. Here he had an interview with Bishop Juxon. It is noteworthy that seventeen years after Sir Robert Cotton's death the house should still be called by his name and not by that of his son and successor. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was known as Cotton House, and was the residence of the Clerk of the House of Commons.

The site is now covered by part of the new Houses of Parliament, but Cotton House is interesting to the student of old London because it stood approximately, perhaps exactly, on the spot once occupied by the chapel of St Mary de la Pewe, which after centuries of importance passed into secular hands at the Dissolution and practically disappeared. Its site became a matter for conjecture and some difference of opinion. But among the Treasury Papers there is a document to which attention is now drawn, I believe, for the first time, showing that the site of St Mary de la Pewe was where Cotton House afterwards stood, on the south side of St Stephen's Chapel.¹

After its ultimate restoration to Sir Thomas Cotton the Cotton Library continued to be a treasure-house for the student. Dugdale had already found there a quantity of material for his *Monasticon*, when Sir Thomas told him that there were two large bales of old papers that had never been opened since Sir Robert packed them up, and gave him permission to

¹ Calendar of State Papers. Treasury Papers, vol. xcvi., No. 102. 17th June 1706.

go through them if he would take the trouble to put them in order. "Whereupon I adventured on the work," says Dugdale, in a letter of 11th June 1678, "and found two lieger books within the bundle, which pleased me so well that I did not stick at putting all those papers into order." He found that they included State papers of Wolsey, Cromwell, Cecil and other important personages of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth, and some correspondence between Mary Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk. All these he carefully sorted, and had them bound in about eighty volumes. Sir Thomas Cotton paid the bookbinder, but, adds Dugdale ruefully, "though he was a man of £6000 per annum estate, he never offered me 6d. for my pains therein."¹

A certain R. Lapthorne, who visited Cotton House in 1692, thus describes the library: "It is situated adjoining to the House of Commons at Westminster, of a great highth, and part of that old fabrick, but very narrow, as I remember, not full six feet in breadth, and not above 26 in length; the books placed on each side, of a tolerable highth, so that a man of an indifferent stature may reach the highest. Over the books are the Roman Emperors, I mean, their heads, in brass statues, which serve for standards in the Catalogue, to direct and find any particular book." Lapthorne had not time to look into the

¹ Frank MSS. Appendix to 6th Report, Roy. Comm. on Hist. MSS., p. 453.

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books, but noticed, among other objects in the library, portraits of Sir Robert Cotton, Ben Jonson, and Wickliffe, and Dr Dee's "instruments of conjuration."¹

The same nominal arrangement of the Cotton volumes is retained to this day, that is, the presses in which they are kept are named after Roman emperors—Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, etc. But Lapthorne's description of the apartment where the books were housed does not tally with Sir Robert Cotton's statement that they occupied the best rooms in the house.

Sir Thomas and Sir John, son and grandson respectively of Sir Robert Cotton, added to the library. It is stated that in 1700 Louis XIV. offered £60,000 for it, but Sir John Cotton, in accordance with the desire and intention of his father and grandfather, in this same year transferred the collection to the nation. By Act of Parliament (1700) "for the better settling and preserving the library kept in the House at Westminster called Cotton House, in the name and family of the Cottons, for the Benefit of the Publick," the library was to be vested at Sir John's death in Trustees, and meanwhile Sir John undertook that in his lifetime it should not be sold or dispersed, and that it should be "kept and preserved by the name of the Cottonian Library, for Publick Use and Advantage." But apart from the room containing the

¹ Pine Coffin MSS. 5th Report, Roy. Comm. on Hist. MSS., Pt. I., p. 383.

manuscripts, the house was to continue as a residence for the Cotton family.

A Keeper was to be appointed who should give security to the value of £500 for the safety of the manuscripts while under his care, and take the following oath:—"I . . . do swear that I shall and will during my continuance in the employment of Keeper of the Cottonian Library use my utmost care and endeavour for the preserving of the same and will not willingly or wittingly permit or suffer the same or any of the said books, papers, parchments, records or other particulars contained in the said Library to be given away, aliened, disposed or otherwise imbezled."

The Trustees appointed were the Lord Chancellor for the time being, the Speaker for the time being (at that time Robert Harley), the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and four members of the Cotton family, including William Hanbury, grandson of Sir John Cotton. Hanbury claimed to have been instrumental in procuring the gift of the library to the public, and on Sir John Cotton's death, within a month of the passing of the Act, went to live at Cotton House and took charge of the library. But he was not formally made Keeper until some years later.

Matthew Hutton, John Anstis, and Humphrey Wanley, all eminent antiquaries, were appointed by the Trustees to examine the library. Their report, dated 2nd June 1703, states that they had compared the books with the entries in Smith's Catalogue, printed in 1696, and had found the latter very

incomplete. They had also discovered that many of the volumes were in a state of decay, and not housed in a safe place.

Three years later Sir Christopher Wren reported that the library-room was so ruinous that it could not be repaired unless a large part of the house were rebuilt, and he proposed that the manuscripts should be removed to an apartment over the ushers' room in the House of Lords. This suggestion was not acted upon. Instead, twenty-seven book-presses were fitted up in Cotton House, at the public expense.

Yet the gift remained practically useless to the public. There was no Keeper, and no regulations had been made for the guidance of students or the safeguarding of the collection. The library could be approached only through the principal private apartments, and the room where it was lodged was small, damp and lighted only by a window at each end. The arch over one of the windows was on the point of falling, and that which supported the room was equally out of repair.

In order to remove the anomaly of a public library lodged in a private house, and to make the collection properly accessible, and also with the view of providing a suitable place for the Royal Library, then inadequately housed in a dilapidated room at St James's, Queen Anne ordered negotiations to be opened with Sir John Cotton (the second) for the purchase of Cotton House and gardens. In 1706 they were bought by the Crown for £4500, under an Act of

Parliament “ For the better Securing Her Majesty’s purchase of Cotton House in Westminster,” which enacted that a convenient room should be built near or adjoining Cotton House, where the library and curiosities should be lodged, “ and there remain to all Posterity, and be for ever known as the Cottonian Library.” William Hanbury was now formally appointed Keeper.

The new room was never built. Nevertheless, in 1708, the Queen had the Royal Library moved from St James’s to Cotton House, where there was now space and to spare for it.

At this time the Royal librarian was Dr Richard Bentley (1662-1742), a celebrated classical and Biblical scholar, and the friend of Evelyn, Newton, Locke and Wren. He was appointed Keeper of the Royal Library in 1694. He had influential friends, and Hanbury was induced to resign the Keepership in his favour. Hanbury states that pressure was indirectly brought to bear on him by a hint that the purchase money for Cotton House, which had not yet been paid to Sir John Cotton, who greatly needed it, would not be paid until he had surrendered his office.

Notwithstanding his resignation, however, Hanbury remained at Cotton House, and the relative positions of Hanbury and Bentley are not clear. They had at least one undignified quarrel. But the office of Keeper appears to have been a sinecure so far as either of them was concerned, for about 1714, John Elphinstone, who claimed to have had virtual

charge of the Library since 1706, and who had attended the illustrious visitors who had come from distant parts of the country to see it, petitioned the Treasury for a recompense of £50 a year for his trouble. He stated that Dr Bentley, who lived in Cotton House, "had never intermeddled with the library, nor had any key of the presses," and that Mr Hanbury, who had deputed him (Elphinstone) to attend, had not kept his agreement as to payment. The Treasury refused Elphinstone more than £40 a year. A few years later he petitioned again, this time in the interests of the library itself, "so much valued at home and abroad, and generally esteemed the best collection of its kind now anywhere extant." He pointed out that it was lodged in rooms near the river, and would perish from damp if provision were not made for firing. Elphinstone received some attention this time; he was paid the arrears of his salary and an allowance for firing and lights.

Soon after this John Anstis suggested that the two libraries might be moved to the rooms over the south aisle of St Paul's Cathedral, and stored in presses similar to those used for the records in the Tower.

A year or two later David Casley, "Deputy Keeper of His Majesty's and the Cottonian Libraries" reported that the Commissioners of Works had taken no steps to repair the dilapidations of Cotton House, because the House of Commons had lately debated the building of a new library. He prayed for speedy directions, "as the damage which may be done by

the rain will be irreparable." Nothing came of the Commons' debate, but in 1727 a lease was taken of Essex House in the Strand, for the purpose of housing more safely the books so endangered by the damp and ruinous state of the old Westminster mansion. Two years after the removal of the two libraries to Essex House, we hear of the rent in arrears and £90 worth of repairs wanting. Essex House was now discovered to be hemmed in by other buildings and exposed to the risk of fire, and in various respects unsuitable. As the lease was about to expire, it was therefore proposed to rent the Earl of Ashburnham's house in Dean's Yard, Westminster, and to transfer the books thither at a cost not exceeding £100. This mansion was recommended by the Commissioners of Works as generally more commodious and much safer from fire. It was here, nevertheless, that the Cottonian and Royal libraries were all but burnt to ashes.

The books were taken back to Westminster, and lodged in Ashburnham House, within a stone's throw of their original home, and in 1731 they came near to entire destruction.

On Saturday morning, 23rd October, about two o'clock, "a great Smoak was perceived by Dr Bentley, which soon broke into flame. It began from a wooden Mantle-Tree's taking fire which lay across a Stove Chimney that was under the Room where the manuscripts of the Royal and Cotton Libraries were, and was communicated to that Room by the wainscot,

and pieces of Timber that stood perpendicularly on each end of the Mantle-Tree." As they hoped to be able to extinguish the fire, the librarians did not at once begin to remove the books out of harm's way, but as the fire grew stronger Casley started to collect such manuscripts as the Codex Alexandrinus (Royal Library) and those of the Cotton Library contained in the press distinguished by the head of Augustus, as being considered the most valuable in the collection. Some of the presses and their contents were removed bodily, others, which by this time were already alight, were broken open and the books were thrown out of the window. Thence they were taken to safety, "some into the apartment of the Captain of Westminster School, others into the Little Cloisters, and afterwards conveyed into the great Boarding House opposite to Ashburnham House, and on October 25, leave being obtained, removed into the new building of the Dormitory of Westminster School." The new dormitory was built in 1722. The books were afterwards removed into the old monastic dormitory, now the Westminster schoolroom.

As soon as he heard of the fire, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Arthur Onslow, *ex officio* one of the Trustees, hurried to Ashburnham House and helped in the rescue work, and next day but one, the intervening day being Sunday, other Trustees, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, with the Speaker, met together to inspect the salvage. Damage had been done by water as well as by fire,

and many of the treasures were in a sorry plight. The vellum books caught by the fire had been closed up by the sealing together of their edges, some beyond hope of recovery. The Speaker summoned a number of persons employed in the record offices in the Tower and elsewhere to confer with him as to what steps to take, and the following measures were resolved upon :—

Paper books to be immediately unbound and put into the softest cold water till the stains disappeared, and then into alum water, to strengthen them. After hanging on lines to dry, they were to be rebound.

Wet vellum manuscripts to be smoothed and straightened very carefully by hand, wiped with a clean flannel, and unbound if necessary.

Vellum manuscripts closed by the fire to be opened with an ivory folder, and turned over leaf by leaf, “ and the glewy Substance which has been fired out upon the Edges . . . taken off by the Fingers carefully, in order to prevent its infecting and corroding the rest.” Manuscripts which were hardened and shrivelled to be softened by cold water, if no better way could be found.

Fragments to be carefully cleaned and kept.

Some very wet pieces had to be dried before a fire.

Bentley and Casley carried out the work with the help of three clerks from the record office of the Exchequer, a bookbinder, and some other persons, in the old dormitory, the Speaker coming frequently to note progress.

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The expenses of the fire, the removal of the libraries from Ashburnham House, and the putting in order of the injured pieces, cost the very moderate sum of £100, but for the damage to Ashburnham House the Treasury had to pay Lord Ashburnham nearly £600.

Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford, whose great collection of manuscripts was eventually to pass into the possession of the nation, refers, in a letter to a friend, to "the terrible calamity that has befallen the Cottonian library, through the villainy of that monster in nature, Bentley. He must be detested by all human creatures—I mean the civilized part of them."

Some of the Royal manuscripts suffered, but the greatest injury was to the Cotton collection. Before the fire it numbered 948 volumes, and of these 114 were now totally destroyed, and 98 badly damaged. The House of Commons committee appointed to report on the condition of the library after the fire expressed surprise that the mischief was no greater. About a third of the injured pieces were restored in the Dormitory by the methods above described. In 1793, when the collection had become part of the British Museum, the Trustees ordered the remaining fragments to be repaired, and the work of restoration was gradually carried on, until in 1864 the identification and arrangement was finally completed as far as it ever could be. A description of the injured pieces was then drawn up and placed on record.

The committee reporting on the Cottonian Library also inspected the ground belonging to Cotton House and vested in the Crown under the Act of 1706, and were of opinion that there or near by a proper Room for the Cottonian Library should be built, "and that the said Room may be part of an edifice to be erected for other uses, and particularly for the preservation of such Publick Records as shall be thought proper to be deposited therein. . . . And it appears to your Committee that the Building before proposed for the Cottonian Library may be so designed as to have some Relation to a future structure, in which the Parliament may be assembled."

But these large plans for a group of national buildings at Westminster were not carried out, and although three years later the Board of Works prepared a plan and estimates for a new House of Commons and Cottonian Library, they had their trouble for nothing. The Cottonian and Royal libraries were left lying in the Westminster Dormitory, and Dr Bentley, deprived, like the books, of his official lodging, had to hire a house, for which he was allowed £100 a year.

There are various manuscript catalogues of the Cottonian Library in existence, made at different times. Their number testifies, if testimony is needed, to the importance of the collection. The first-mentioned seems to be that begun by "Mr Boswell" about 1630 or 1631 (?) at the command of Charles I. In 1633 "Mr Dickinson" was at work

on a catalogue with a view to finding whether any of the manuscripts belonged to the King. Boswell's and Dickinson's catalogues were probably one and the same.

The first catalogue printed was Thomas Smith's *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecæ Cottoniæ*, Oxford, 1696, folio. It affords a clue to some of the manuscripts lost in the fire, but the number of articles it enumerates are less than a fourth of the actual contents of the library. It is thus of limited value, and it is written, besides, in Latin of a style which few persons can read with ease.

In 1793 the Trustees of the British Museum, with whom the Cottonian Trustees were now joined, ordered the preparation of a new catalogue, as the imperfections of Smith's were so frequently complained of. This was undertaken by Joseph Planta, of the Museum, afterwards Principal Librarian. Planta also rescued and restored fifty-one of the damaged manuscripts. In 1802, in accordance with the instructions of a royal commission appointed to calendar and index all public records, Planta's catalogue was printed. He had contemplated making a subject catalogue, but found the subjects too numerous and miscellaneous. But he provides a very useful Index. It is a pity that some parts of the text of his catalogue are quite unnecessarily expressed in Latin.

III

ADDITIONS TO THE COTTONIAN LIBRARY

THOMAS RYMER, historiographer royal, and editor of the *Fœdera*, died at the end of 1713. His historical papers, filling fifty-nine volumes, and covering the period 1115-1698, passed, with the rest of his property, to one Anna Parnell, from whom they were purchased by the Government for £215. They were ordered to be placed with the Cottonian collection. They were not handed over to the public authorities, however, until 1756, when the House of Lords ordered them to be deposited in the British Museum.

The narrow escape of the Cottonian manuscripts from destruction moved Major Arthur Edwards, by his will, made in 1738, to bequeath to the Cottonian Trustees a sum of £7000 for the erection of a house for the library where it might be safe from another such catastrophe as the fire of 1731. But if, before the will came into effect, a building of the kind should have been erected, the money was to be expended on such manuscripts, books of antiquities, coins, etc., "as might be worthy to increase and enlarge

the said Cottonian Library." In addition, the testator bequeathed his books, consisting of some 2000 volumes of English, French, and more especially Italian works. Major Edwards died in 1743, but owing to a life interest in his property the legacy did not accrue to the nation till 1769, when other arrangements for the welfare of the Cottonian Library had been for some time completed. It was therefore invested in Old South Sea Annuity Stock, and the interest was expended on books, manuscripts, coins, sculpture and natural history specimens. In 1815 the purchase of the library of Baron von Moll, of Munich (20,000 volumes), and of Charles Burney's books on music, together with a small contribution to the General Fund, extinguished the fund bequeathed by Major Edwards.

The next, and the greatest addition to the Cottonian Library consisted of the Harleian manuscripts. These were named after their chief collector, Robert Harley (1661-1724), who held high offices of State under Queen Anne, and was created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer in 1711. He intended the manuscripts, chiefly, to illustrate the history of Great Britain, and added to them articles from the collections of Foxe, the martyrologist, Stow, author of the famous *Survey of London*, and Sir Symonds D'Ewes, author of *The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. But they also included many Biblical and classical manuscripts from religious houses and other sources all over Europe.

The collection owed much to the zeal of its indefatigable librarian, Humphrey Wanley, at one time an assistant in the Bodleian Library, and engaged by Harley, in 1708, to catalogue his manuscripts. Wanley spent the remainder of his life—eighteen years—on this task, but at the same time kept vigilant watch for new acquisitions, and was ready to attack any stronghold and to risk any rebuffs to secure fresh treasures for the Harley Library. Thus he wrote to the Dean of Lichfield to ask him to persuade the Chapter to part with “their old Book”—the eighth-century Gospels of St Chad—either for money or for books to a greater value. We can scarcely wonder that he received no answer. On another occasion he found that Sir Hans Sloane was a rival purchaser at a sale where Lord Oxford desired to buy some books. Wanley therefore wrote to Sir Hans to see if some arrangement could be made, and Sir Hans courteously relinquished his claim to the purchase. Nor was it the first time that he had thus stood aside in Lord Oxford’s favour.

The instructions given by Wanley to one Andrew Hay, who was employed to travel on the Continent in search of desirable acquisitions, will give some idea of the means by which this magnificent collection was augmented.

“ . . . At Monza (about ten miles from Milan) is an imperfect Antiphonarium Gregorii I. Papae. It is all written upon purple-coloured Parchment,

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with Capital Letters of Gold. Buy this if you can.

“At Rome, the Greek monks of St Basil have very many old Greek MSS., written in Capitals, particularly a Book of the IV Gospels, and some Pieces of St Gregory Nazianzen upon St Paul’s Epistles. Buy as many as you can, for I hear they are poor, and therefore they may sell the cheaper. They have likewise a Greek charter of Roger, King of Sicily, in five Pieces, written upon Bark or vellum. Buy these also, if you can.

“. . . At Naples, in the Library of the Augustine Friars of St John de Carbonara, is a Greek MS. of the Gospels (or of the Homilies upon the Gospels) all written in Capitals with Letters of Gold, upon Purple Parchment. This must be bought. There is also a Dioscorides in Greek Capitals, being a large Book with Figures of the Plants, etc. This must be bought.

“Pray, Sir, all along in your journey endeavour to secure what Greek MSS. and Latin Classical MSS. you can, provided they come at reasonable prices.”

The manuscript of Wanley’s Diary, full of interest to the lover of old books, came to the British Museum with the Lansdowne collection (Lansdowne MS. 771).

Besides manuscripts, the Harley Library included a fine collection of printed books. The second Earl of Oxford added largely to both divisions, but after

his death, in 1741, the printed books, numbering about 50,000, were dispersed and sold for less than had been spent on their binding alone. It was Lord Oxford's wish, however, that the manuscripts should remain intact, though it was not until the Sloane Bequest was offered to the country that steps were taken to secure them for the nation. Sir Hans Sloane died in January, 1753, and in the following March the Speaker proposed to the House of Commons that a fund should be raised for the purchase of both the Sloane and the Harley collections. The public spirit in which their offer of £10,000 for the latter was received by the Harley representatives is shown by the letter addressed, in April, 1753, to the Speaker by the Duchess of Portland, Lord Oxford's daughter and heiress.

“ As soon as I was acquainted with the proposal you had made in the House of Commons, in relation to my Father's Collection of manuscripts, I informed my Mother of it, who has given the Duke of Portland and me full power to do therein as we shall think fit.

“ Though I am told the expense of collecting them was immense, and that, if they were to be dispersed, they would probably sell for a great deal of money, yet, as a sum has been named, and as I know it was my Father's and is my Mother's intention that they should be kept together, I will not bargain with the Publick. I give you this trouble therefore to acquaint you that I am ready to accept of your

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proposal upon condition that this great and valuable collection shall be kept together in a proper repository, as an addition to the Cotton Library, and be called by the name of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts.

“I hope you do me the justice to believe that I do not consider this as a sale for an adequate price. But your idea is so right, and so agreeable to what I know was my Father’s intention, that I have a peculiar satisfaction in contributing all I can to facilitate the success of it.”

The Harleian Manuscripts, therefore, consisting of over 10,000 articles, besides 40,000 charters, etc., became national property, at the price of £10,000, as an addition to the Cottonian Library. The collection brought with it the catalogue begun by Wanley in 1708, and continued by Casley, the Cottonian librarian. Like the Cottonian Catalogue, it was ordered by the commissioners appointed to deal with the indexing of the public records to be printed, and was issued in 1808-1812, in 4 vols. folio, with indexes by the Rev. T. H. Horne.

Since the incorporation of the British Museum in 1753 there appear to have been only two instances where a distinction—and that but a nominal one—was drawn between the Cottonian Library and the British Museum Library. The first was in the case of the legacy received, in 1756, from the widow of Thomas Madox, historiographer royal, who bequeathed all her husband’s manuscripts, filling

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94 volumes, and including materials for a Feudal History of Europe, as an “addition to the Cottonian Library in the British Museum.” The other relates to the Edwards’ bequest, received in 1769, under a will, however, made in 1738, as stated above.

IV

THE SLOANE BEQUEST

IN the course of his natural history and medical studies Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753); physician to Christ's Hospital, physician-general to George I., physician-in-ordinary to George II., and, in 1727, President of the Royal Society, amassed a fine library, and a vast number of curiosities, including the large miscellaneous collections of his friend William Courten, otherwise Charleton. In his younger days he went to Jamaica as physician to the Governor, the Duke of Albemarle, and there studied botany and natural history, collected specimens, and employed an artist to make drawings. The fruit of his labours was a *Natural History of Jamaica*, which he dedicated to Queen Anne. He attempted to bring home some live reptiles for his museum, but was not fortunate with them. A tame snake, seven feet long, which he kept in a jar, escaped one day before the voyage, went upstairs to the bedrooms, and was killed by the terrified servants. The other creatures all died at sea.

Sloane's treasures were gathered first in his house in Great Russell Street, and then moved to the

Manor House at Chelsea. They included animal, vegetable and mineral specimens ; Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, British and American antiquities, amounting in all to about 200,000 articles, and a number of books. Sloane is known to fame rather by this "museum" than by his library, yet his collection of printed books, on every branch of learning and in all languages, and over 4000 manuscripts, was a valuable one. He was not a bibliomaniac, but he loved books, and treated them with respect, and when Handel, visiting at his house one day, laid a greasy muffin on one of his volumes, Sir Hans was justly indignant.

"To be sure it was a gareless trick," said Handel afterwards, "put it tid no monstrous mischief ; put it but the old poog-worm treadfully out of sorts. I offered my best apologies, put the old miser would not have done with it."

"It is really a want of feeling to do these things," said Sir Hans, when relating the incident to a friend. "If it had been a biscuit it would not have mattered, but muffin and butter—only think, Mr Martin Folkes ! "¹

Sloane made no secret of his intentions with regard to the disposal of the "museum" after his death, and when the Prince and Princess of Wales went to

¹ De Quincey relates an instance of similar boorishness on the part of Wordsworth, whom he describes as tearing his way through an uncut volume with a buttery knife "that left its greasy honours behind it upon every page."

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Chelsea to see the old man and his treasures, the Prince told him that the collection was “an ornament to the nation, and that great honour would redound from the establishing of it for the public use, to the lastest posterity.” After Sir Hans’ death in 1753, it was found that, subject to certain conditions, he had left his museum and library to the nation.

“ Having had from my youth, a strong inclination to the study of plants and all other productions of nature, and having through the course of many years with great labour and expense gathered together whatever could be procured either in my own or foreign countries that was rare and curious, and being fully convinced that nothing tends more to raise our ideas of the power, wisdom, goodness, providence, and other perfections of the Deity, or more to the comfort and well-being of his creatures, than the enlargement of our knowledge in the works of nature, I do will and desire that for the promoting of these noble ends, the glory of God and the good of man, my collection in all its branches may be, if possible, kept and preserved together, whole and entire, in my manor-house in the parish of Chelsea situate near the physic-garden, given by me to the Company of Apothecaries for the same purposes.” So runs the preamble to Sir Hans Sloane’s will.

He then proceeds to bequeath to a long list of important executors “all that my collection or museum at, in, or about my manor-house at Chelsea aforesaid, which consists of too great a variety to be

particularly described, but I mean all my library of books, drawings, manuscripts, prints, medals, and coins, ancient and modern, antiquities, seals, etc., cameos, and intaglios, etc., precious stones, agates, jaspers, etc., vessels, etc., of agate, and jasper, etc., chrysitals, mathematical instruments, drawings and pictures and all other things in my said collection or museum . . . ”

He wished these to be placed under the care of certain “ learned, experienced and judicious persons, who are above all low and mean views ”—namely, the King, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, the Archbishop of Canterbury for the time being, the Lord Chancellor for the time being, other officers of State for the time being, and the Bishop of London for the time being. The number of Trustees was never to exceed fifty.

Then follows a stipulation that there should be paid to his executors a consideration of £20,000, a sum which in no wise expressed the value of the museum, and failing the acceptance of his offer by the English Government, the collections were to be offered to foreign academies. If no foreign body would buy them, then they were to be dispersed and sold as best they might.

A subsequent codicil revoked the bequest so far as it concerned the manor-house of Chelsea, and thus the nation was left free, in the event of its acquiring the museum, to house it wherever it might be thought desirable. Regulations were to be drawn up, and

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the collections were to be open to all persons who wished to see them.

As it usually happens in such cases, the Government were not eager to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them. The King, named in Sloane's will as first of the Trustees, declined to act, saying that he did not believe there were £20,000 in the Treasury, though probably a point of etiquette may have stood in the way of his holding such an office in any case. The dilettante of Strawberry Hill had only derision for the scheme. "Sir Hans Sloane is dead," he wrote to a friend, "and has made me one of the trustees of his museum, which is to be offered for twenty thousand pounds. . . . He valued it at four-score thousand pounds, and so would anybody who loves hippopotamuses, sharks with one ear, and spiders as big as geese ! You may believe that those who think money the most valuable of all curiosities will not be purchasers."

Fortunately, the Speaker of the House of Commons at this time was Arthur Onslow, one of the Trustees of the Cottonian Library, and himself a lover of books. He subsequently bequeathed his collection of printed Bibles to the library of the Museum which he helped to establish. He saw in Sir Hans Sloane's offer the opportunity for bringing the Cottonian Library out of its obscurity, and for adding to it the Harleian manuscripts, then in the market, and lent all his influence in aid of the plan.

The matter was referred to a committee of the

House of Commons, which reported that the Sloane museum was of much greater intrinsic value than the price asked for it, and made the following recommendations :—

That the sum of £20,000 be paid for the museum, which was to be kept entire and maintained for the use and benefit of the public.

That a proper repository be provided for the better reception and more convenient use of the Cottonian Library and of any additions thereto.

That the bequest of Major Edwards to the Cottonian Trustees be applied either towards providing such repository or towards purchasing additions to the Cottonian Library agreeably to the provisions of his will.

That the Harleian collection would be a proper addition to be made to the Cottonian Library, and that £10,000 be paid for it.

That the sum of £20,000 and such further sums as shall be necessary for all these purposes be raised by lottery for a sum not exceeding £700,000.

The Act of Parliament passed in general accordance with these recommendations received the Royal Assent in June, 1753. It was entitled “An Act for the Purchase of the Museum or Collection of Sir Hans Sloane and of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts, and for providing one General Repository for the better Reception and more convenient Use of the said Collections and of the Cottonian Library and of the additions thereto.” It provided for funds by

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authorising a public lottery in which there should be 100,000 shares at £3 each. £200,000 was to be set aside for prizes, and £100,000 applied to the purposes set forth in the title of the Act. Further, within the cities of London or Westminster or their suburbs "one general repository" was to be "erected or provided for Sloane's museum, the Cottonian Library, the Harleian manuscripts, and Edwards's additions," though these several collections were to be kept separate and not blended. The Act also incorporated the Trustees appointed by Sloane's will, with the exception of the King, and with the addition of two of the Cottonian Trustees, two Sloane family Trustees, and two Harley family Trustees, by the name of The Trustees of the British Museum, and thus settled the title of the new institution.

Free access to the collections was to be afforded "to all studious and curious Persons."

It will be seen that the popular belief that Sir Hans Sloane "founded the British Museum" is partly right and partly wrong. He indeed initiated that important part of it which comprises natural history specimens, but the foundation of the national library to which the Sloane collections were linked on, as well as of the antiquities, was laid by the gift of Sir John Cotton. Cotton's gift included, besides priceless manuscripts, a number of "coins, medals, and other rarities and curiosities." It is not ungracious to say that the library, being already in existence, would have developed and grown without Sir Hans

Sloane's help or intervention. The Act of Parliament establishing the Museum did not merge the Sloane collections in the Cotton collections and additions, or *vice versa*; it simply brought them together and provided that they should be housed under one roof and one name, and ordered by the same administration. But the dominant importance of the great libraries now brought together over the antiquities and natural history specimens was marked, if not by styling the officers "Librarians," at any rate by the appointment of the Principal Librarian as chief officer of the Museum. He was to be appointed, moreover, not by the Trustees, but by the King, from two persons nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker, and he was required to give a bond of £1000 (now increased to £10,000) for the faithful discharge of his duties.

It is true that the first three Principal Librarians, Gowin Knight, F.R.S., Matthew Maty, M.D., F.R.S., and Charles Morton, M.D., F.R.S., were all men of science, though Maty at any rate was equally a man of letters. But whenever the office has fallen vacant, it has been filled by promoting one of the staff of either the Department of Manuscripts or the Department of Printed Books. The Principal Librarian has never been chosen from outside the Museum staff since the appointment of the first holder of the title in 1756, nor from any department save that of the Manuscripts or Printed Books.

More than a hundred years after the incorporation

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of the British Museum this question of the relative importance of the chief departments was raised by certain memorialists who disapproved of the proposal to separate the natural history collections from the rest. These memorialists included the most eminent naturalists and scientific men of the day, and they roundly asserted, with remarkable lack of scientific precision, that the British Museum, when established by Act of Parliament, *was essentially a Natural History Collection* (see Ch. VIII.). They do not appear to have read the Act they professed to quote.

They further stated that by far the greater number of visitors to the Museum were those "who frequented the halls containing the Natural History collection." But they would probably have admitted that the majority of these were not students, but sightseers. In *The Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 1808, the first official guide, it is plainly declared that the chief use of the institution lay in the assistance it gave to men of letters and artists by affording them materials for the prosecution of their studies, and that the provision of amusement for sightseers was "a popular, though far less useful application of the Museum."

V

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE Act of 1753 laid down that a general repository should be provided for the Sloane, Cottonian and Harleian collections, and various schemes were considered by the Trustees. The plan for a building at Westminster, which in time should make part of a group including the Houses of Parliament, was again rejected, on account of the expense, and a suggestion for using the Banqueting Room at Whitehall found no favour. The Trustees' choice at last lay between Buckingham House, now Buckingham Palace, which was offered for £30,000, and Montagu House, Bloomsbury, offered for £10,000. The matter of price settled the question, and notwithstanding the lessons which should have been taught by the vicissitudes of the Cottonian Library through the damp and disrepair of Cotton House, the dilapidations and inconvenience of Essex House and the fiery disaster of Ashburnham House, yet another handsome but ramshackle old mansion was chosen as the receptacle for two or three invaluable libraries and the Sloane museum, instead of a building especially and appropriately designed.

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The proceeds of the lottery which was to defray the cost of carrying out the provisions of the Act of 1753 amounted to about £95,000 after expenses were paid, and this was disbursed, in round figures, as follows :—

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Sloane Collections | £20,000 |
| Harleian Manuscripts . . . | 10,000 |
| Purchase of Montagu House . | 10,000 |
| Repairs and Fittings . . . | 13,000 |
| Removal and other expenses . | 13,337 |
| Invested for maintenance . | 28,663 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £95,000 |

The first Montagu House was built about 1674 by Ralph, first Duke of Montagu, sometime Ambassador to the Court of France. It was planned by Robert Hooke, and is described by Evelyn as “a stately and ample palace, . . . built after the French pavilion way.” Less than a dozen years later it was destroyed by fire. On the original foundations, and on what remained of the walls, a new house was erected, under the direction of the French architect Puget, and decorated within by French artists. It had a spacious garden, and the whole occupied seven or eight acres. Adjoining the grounds on the north was a famous duelling-place, called the Field of the Forty Foot-steps, from a duel fought there by two brothers for love of a lady. The lady herself sat on a bank hard by and watched the combat. Both brothers were

killed, and legend says that where their feet had trodden in the struggle the grass never grew again.

The first meeting held by the Trustees in Montagu House was in April, 1754. By the following spring the alterations were sufficiently advanced to admit of the reception of the collections. The Harleian manuscripts were the first to arrive, the Sloane and Cottonian libraries came next, and lastly the Sloane museum, all being in place by the end of 1755. But the repairs to the house were not completed till three years later.

The south part of the present Museum occupies the ground covered by Montagu House, and the northern buildings stand on what was formerly the garden.

On 15th January 1759 the British Museum was opened to the public, under Dr Gowin Knight, F.R.S., as Principal Librarian. Knight was a man of science, noted for his researches in magnetism, and the inventor of an improved compass which was adopted for use in the navy. He was appointed in 1756.

The first guide to the Museum seems to have been an anonymous and unofficial pamphlet, without date, but conjecturally assigned to the year 1760, entitled *A View of the British Museum relating what is most remarkable and curious to be seen there. Collected from several authentic Reports for the Benefit of Those who have a Mind to be acquainted with the principal*

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Parts of it. From this we learn that the institution at that time consisted of three departments.

I. Manuscripts, Medals and Coins, deposited in six rooms, up one pair of stairs, on the east side of the house.

II. Natural and artificial products, in six rooms on the west side.

III. Printed Books, Maps, Globes, Drawings, etc., in twelve rooms on the first story.

The rooms on the ground floor, level with the garden, were either “designed for the convenience of such as came to peruse or study the books,” or were filled with duplicates or articles for which there was no space elsewhere. The reader is given an extremely brief description of some of the busts, pictures, painted ceilings and mummies, but no further information regarding the library.

This pamphlet was followed, in 1761, by another anonymous and unofficial publication directed to a similar purpose—viz. *The General Contents of the British Museum, with Remarks serving as a Directory in viewing that noble Cabinet*, London, 1761. It is a worthy attempt to give a bird’s-eye view of the treasures of the collections and to assist the visitor to an intelligent grasp of the mass of material before him. But it does not give any idea of the appearance of the old house, nor does it provide a plan, though its account of the arrangements is more detailed than its predecessor’s. The six rooms of the first department contained manuscripts, etc., as follows:—

I. Royal¹ and Cottonian manuscripts.

II., III., IV. Harleian manuscripts.

V. Sloane collection of medals (coins).

VI. Sloane manuscripts.

The eight rooms of the third department contained the Printed Books :

I.; II. Royal Printed Books.¹

IV.-VI. Sloane Printed Books.

On the upper floor "a Saloon is appropriated for the Reception of Company that happen to come before the Hour mentioned in their Tickets, who, after having viewed the articles contained in the Hall and first Room already mentioned, and the Paintings, cannot spend their Time disagreeably here; as from the Windows you not only have an agreeable View of the Gardens belonging to the House, which are far from being inelegant, but a delightful Prospect of the Hills and high Grounds of *Hampstead, Highgate*, and the circumjacent Places."

Visitors were also expected to admire the ceilings and decorations painted by the French artists, De La Fosse, Rousseau and Monoyer.

It seems that no official guide or description was issued till the publication of the *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, London, 1808, by which time the collections filled thirty-eight rooms. On the lower floor, the Printed Books occupied Rooms I.-XII., and Rooms XIII. and XIV. in other parts of the house. On the upper floor, Room III. contained

.¹ The Royal Library was presented in 1757.

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the Lansdowne Manuscripts (purchased in 1807) ; Room IV., the Sloane and Birch Manuscripts (the latter received by bequest in 1765) ; Rooms V. and VI. the Harleian Manuscripts and additions ; Room VII., the Royal Manuscripts (presented in 1757), and the Cottonian Manuscripts.

The Reading-room was Room XIV. on the ground floor. Here were kept Parliamentary records, gazetteers and newspapers.

Rules for the use of the Museum, including the Reading-room, were drawn up by the Trustees in 1757. They provided that the Museum was to be shown every day except Saturday, Sunday, Good Friday, and a week at Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. Ten persons only were admitted at one time, and that by ticket, and these parties of ten were conducted through the rooms by officers of the institution. They were at first allowed three hours to make the round, but this was reduced, in 1768, to two hours. They were to be first conducted through the Sloane collection, then through the Sloane library, and lastly through the two libraries of manuscripts and the library of Major Edwards. No officer or servant of the Museum was to accept any fee or gratuity. No children were to be admitted. Catalogues of the books, manuscripts and other objects were to be placed in each of the rooms to which they related, and the books, etc., were to be numbered in accordance with the catalogue.

A particular room was to be allotted where persons

who had obtained leave from the Trustees might read and write without interruption, and any book, or other part of the collection, so far as was consistent with the safety thereof, was to be brought to a reader at his request, by the messenger, who was likewise to furnish readers with pens and ink, if desired.

Readers and students were to be admitted to the Reading-room on obtaining leave from the Trustees and agreeing to observe the rules. The leave was given for six months, and could be renewed on application. A person wishing to transcribe might not lay the paper on which he wrote on the book or manuscript transcribed from. No manuscript or the greater part of one was to be transcribed without the Trustees' permission. Every reader was to return the book or other object borrowed from the collections to the officer in charge of the Reading-room.

The Reading-room was situated at the corner of the basement, and fitted with a table covered with green baize, and twenty chairs. It opened by a glass door into the garden, and the garden was a pleasant spot, well stocked and planted. It is said that in the year following its restoration, after a period, doubtless, of utter neglect, it contained six hundred species. Flower borders and a terrace occupied the western side, and a lime avenue the eastern, and between these was a lawn beyond which the view extended across the Field of the Forty Footsteps to the open country. But by the

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beginning of the nineteenth century the view over the fields was blocked by houses.

In 1768 the regulations were extended. Among other things, they permitted the Trustees and officers to use the gardens and to take their friends there, but the friends were not to be allowed to remain in the gardens alone. Stringent precautions were to be observed against fire, and the premises were to be searched at night in case any nefarious person should be lurking there. As regards the use of the library, written notice had now to be given the day before of the book or manuscript required, and certain specially valuable or fragile specimens were not to be removed out of the collection to which they belonged. A catalogue of these was to be kept by the officer of the Reading-room. No part of the collection was to be carried out of the general repository, except books, deeds, etc., required for evidence in a court of law, and these were to be taken by the under-librarian, who was to remain with them the whole time and bring them back with him, "for which extraordinary trouble and attendance it is expected that a proper satisfaction be made him."

For the first year readers were admitted by a committee of Trustees, but in January, 1760; the Principal Librarian was empowered to grant admittance when there was no quorum, or in cases of emergency.

The first list of readers admitted to the use of the

Reading-room, by a committee of Trustees meeting on 12th January 1759, was as follows :—

“ The Rev. Dr Taylor, Residentiary of St Paul’s, for 6 months.

“ The Rev. Dr Lowth, Prebendary of Durham, for 2 months.

“ Daniel Wray, Esq., for 6 months.

“ Mr Musgrave, Editor of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, for 6 months.

“ Mr Edward Langton, at the desire of Lord Royston, for 6 months.

“ Mr Stuart, of Grosvenor Street, for 6 months.

“ The Rev. Dr Chandler, for 3 months.

“ Taylor White, Esq., for 1 month ; and that the said Mr White having occasion to make drawings of some cinnamon and cassia, such books of dried plants as contain the said specimens be carried to him into the Reading-room for that purpose.”

One hundred and forty readers were admitted during the first year. Dr Johnson was admitted on 8th May 1761, but it does not seem that he used his privilege. He preferred to study at the Royal Library at Buckingham House.

The first, and for ten years the only woman reader was Catherine Macaulay, the historian, the lady whose statue, in the character of History, was set up during her lifetime in the Church of St Stephen’s, Walbrook, to testify to the admiration felt for her by the incumbent, Dr Wilson.

Gray, the poet, admitted 20th July 1759, thus

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describes his co-readers. “ We were : a man that writes for Lord Royston, a man that writes for Dr Burton of York, a third that writes for the Emperor of Germany, or Dr Pocock, for he speaks the worst English I ever heard ; Dr Stukely, who writes for himself, the very worst person he could write for, and I, who only read to know if there were anything worth writing, and that not without some difficulty. I find that they have printed 1000 copies of the Harleian Catalogue and have sold four-score ; that they have £900 a year income, and spend £1300 ; and that they are building apartments for the under-keepers, so I expect in winter to see the collection advertised and set to sale.”

Gray was right as to the poverty of the Museum. The Principal Librarian was then paid £200 a year, and his subordinates in proportion.

It is curious to notice that the French Revolution caused a considerable increase in the number of readers. It is stated that nearly a half of those admitted in 1795 were French refugees, among them being the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Bishops of Uzés and Troyes.

On account of its dampness the first Reading-room was abandoned in 1774, in favour of one on the next floor directly above it, which remained in use till 1817. By that time the number of readers had so increased that another room on the upper floor, where the Harleian MSS. were kept, was prepared for them.

By 1823, when the King's Library was presented by George IV., Montagu House was very much in need of repair ; it was not fireproof—the flues being defective—and in other ways it was unsuited for a public building, for which, besides, it was not originally intended. Plans for a new building had been prepared in 1821, but some legal difficulties arose as to the right of the Trustees to build to the north of the existing house. The Court of Chancery decided in the Trustees' favour, but the acquisition of the King's Library and the decision to provide special accommodation for it caused the earlier plan to be superseded. The new scheme took into account the future as well as the present, and the provision of an exclusive apartment for the King's Library was the beginning of the rebuilding of the whole museum.

Sir Robert Smirke, appointed Architect to the Museum in 1815, prepared a design which was substantially that of the British Museum of to-day, in the classical style made fashionable by the influence of the Elgin Marbles, which had been added to the collections in 1815-1816. The first part of the new building to be completed was the east wing, containing the noble gallery known as the King's Library, where George IV.'s gift is housed for all time. The room above it was at first intended for the nation's pictures, but this idea was wisely abandoned. Particular care was taken to render the new building as far as possible fireproof.

The King's Library, and three smaller rooms at its south end, two of which were assigned as reading-rooms for a hundred and twenty readers, were completed by the middle of 1826. In a few years' time the number of readers was in excess of the accommodation, and a proposal was made to use the King's Library itself as a reading-room. This was not carried out. But—apparently about 1838—the readers were removed to two apartments in the new north wing, afterwards used as the Music and Catalogue rooms.

It was shortly before this time that the Museum admitted to a comparatively humble post in its service one of its greatest servants and one of the most illustrious librarians who have ever lived.

VI

ANTHONY PANIZZI

OF all the scholarly and industrious men whose work has raised the national library to its present importance and efficiency, the most prominent is Anthony Panizzi, an Italian, who has been called not only "the Napoleon of librarians," but "the second founder of the British Museum." When appointed Keeper of the Printed Books, Panizzi was subjected to a torrent of angry abuse merely because he was a foreigner. But though we may regret that it was not an Englishman who played Panizzi's part in the history of the library, we need not be ashamed that an English institution was then, as always, generous enough to appoint to the vacant post the best man available, without regard to more or less irrelevant considerations.

Panizzi, born in 1797, was a lawyer by profession. His patriotic interference in his country's affairs brought him under the displeasure of the Government of Modena. He was sentenced to death, but saved himself by flight to England. The Modenese authorities then hanged him in effigy and sent him the bill for the expenses.

For some time after his arrival in England he taught languages in Liverpool. One of his pupils, an heiress, was induced to leave her school by a man named Wakefield, who was subsequently tried at Leicester on a charge of abduction. Panizzi was much interested in the affair, and attended the trial. By his knowledge of foreign marriage law he was able to make himself of use to Mr (afterwards Lord) Brougham, one of the counsel engaged in the case, to whom he was introduced by William Roscoe, and through Brougham's influence he was appointed, in 1828, Professor of Italian at University College. When Brougham became Lord Chancellor and a Trustee of the British Museum he obtained for Panizzi the post of additional assistant librarian in the national library. This was in April, 1831. Panizzi already had influential friends, among them Thomas Grenville, diplomat and book collector, with whom he shared a great love for books in general and an interest in Italian literature in particular. Grenville also was a Museum Trustee, and no doubt seconded Brougham's efforts on Panizzi's behalf. In 1832 Panizzi took out letters of naturalisation.

Panizzi had had no experience of librarian's work before his appointment to the British Museum, but he possessed not only a natural inclination towards literary study, as shown by his editions of Boiardo and Ariosto, but also innate genius for bibliography, and he collected books for his own

amusement. He soon measured the needs, the shortcomings and the potentialities of the national library. He threw all his energies and interest into his work, and did not take too restricted a view of the duties of an assistant librarian. For one thing, he suggested to the Trustees that they should try to secure some of the books from the convents then being suppressed in Spain and Portugal, where there were many valuable specimens which had been brought from Italy at the time that the early printers were producing their masterpieces. But the policy of the Trustees at this time was narrow and short-sighted, and the suggestion was ignored. Again, in regard to cataloguing, his zeal was such that the Finance Committee in 1835 recommended that his salary of £275 should be increased to £350, but the Trustees refused to agree to the recommendation "on general grounds."

Panizzi was also instrumental in bringing about reforms in the Reading-room. Hitherto, the reader had merely handed in the name of the book desired, leaving the press-mark to be supplied. Panizzi now required him to consult the catalogue and transcribe from it the particulars necessary for the identification of the book. After he was made Keeper he introduced tickets for books very similar to those now in use, bearing on the back rules which, with some slight modifications, are still in force. All this gave great offence to foolish people.

On the retirement of the Rev. H. H. Baber, in 1837,

Panizzi was appointed Keeper of the Printed Books, over the head of his senior officer, the Rev. H. F. Cary. It was not until Panizzi heard from Cary himself that the Trustees would not have appointed him (Cary) in any case, considering him physically unsuited to such an arduous post, that Panizzi applied for the Keepership. When he received it, a storm of indignation arose. His foreign origin, his manners, his methods, everything about him, in the eyes of some of his critics, were all objectionable. A large part of the Press abused him in language sometimes childish, often vulgar, and always spiteful. One journal referred to him as "the Italian harlequin, who jumped over the heads of so many better men into the Keepership of the Printed Books at the British Museum," and proceeded to further insolent abuse solely because Panizzi had enforced a very reasonable rule made when the Reading-room was first opened—that readers must return the books they had used.

During practically the whole of his term of office at the Museum, Panizzi had jealous enemies to contend against. Indeed, it has been said that a curious chapter might be written on the subject of "Museum Quarrels." It need not, however, be written here, but it is interesting in this connection to recall an instruction issued by the Trustees to the Museum staff in 1768, which seems to have been drafted by a prophetic pen, unless, perhaps, history repeated itself :

" It is the desire and intention of the Trustees, and they do expect, that a good understanding should as far as possible ever subsist among all the officers belonging to the Museum, . . . and that all of them in general should consider themselves, and the other officers, as gentlemen living under the same roof, and equally engaged in carrying on the same noble work, and among whom, for that, as well as for other reasons, no personal pique or animosity should ever find the least place, but the most perfect harmony, and a true spirit of benevolence, ought always to be cultivated and prevail."

No doubt Panizzi was overbearing, and arrogant under criticism, but his far-sightedness, his firm grasp of the possibilities of the library, and his jealousy for its welfare and progress, made it most natural that he should fail in patience with those, less clear-sighted than himself, who would build for the moment rather than for posterity. He seems to have been the only man then really eager to bring the library to the highest pitch of perfection, to make good its defects, and to render it at once useful to the poor student and worthy of a great nation ; and with these large views he combined careful attention to details that should ensure orderly working and efficient service.

" I want a poor student," he told the Committee of the House of Commons that sat in 1835-1836 to inquire into the management and affairs of the British Museum, " to have the same means of indulging his learned curiosity, of following his rational

pursuits, of consulting the same authorities, of furthering the most intricate inquiry, as the richest man in the kingdom, as far as books go, and I contend that the government is bound to give him the most liberal and unlimited assistance in this respect. I want the British Museum library to have books of both descriptions [both modern, ordinary works, and costly rarities] and I want an extra grant for those rare and costly works which we have not, and which cannot be bought but upon opportunities presenting themselves."

Panizzi also told the Committee that he considered the library of the British Museum far inferior to the Royal Library in Paris, and was of opinion that it required a special grant of not less than £10,000 a year for ten years to bring it up to what it ought to be, and that the ordinary grant of £2000 should be raised to £3000. Also, to give additional space, the natural history collections should be removed elsewhere.

As regarded the vexed question of the Catalogue, he considered an alphabetical catalogue an essential need and much more important than a classed one. He saw the difficulties of making a classed catalogue, and entirely disapproved of the attempt.

The enormous increase both of books and of readers which the near future was to bring seems to have been anticipated by no one save, perhaps, Panizzi. The free and easy methods advocated by some of his critics, which might possibly have been adopted in

the library then, would certainly be out of the question to-day. For example, Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, in his pamphlet of 1846, complained of the tickets Panizzi introduced, to be filled up by readers with the name and other particulars of the book desired. "To compel a reader to fill up the present ticket," he said, "is in fact to impose upon him a duty which belongs to the paid servant to the public." How would the paid servants of the public get through their work to-day if they had to fill up all the readers' tickets ?

Panizzi also realised the difference between a library such as that of the British Museum and a library of education. He favoured the establishment of separate educational libraries, and the crowded state of the Reading-room justified him. It was incredible then, and it is incredible to-day, that every reader there is engaged in research so recondite, or studies so advanced, as to need the vast resources of the greatest library in the world. This was presently recognised by the Trustees. It was calculated that one-fifth of the readers in the greatly overcrowded room were young persons who had not completed their education, and who came to read elementary works easily obtainable elsewhere. On 20th May 1862 notice was given that the age limit for readers was to be raised from eighteen to twenty-one. Persons under twenty-one are not now admitted except by special permission of the Trustees, given only in very rare cases.

In 1838 the Trustees decided that a new catalogue of the books in the library down to the end of 1839 should be compiled and printed. Entirely against his better judgment, Panizzi endeavoured to carry out their wishes. Through some confusion—perhaps in the drafting of the Trustees' instructions—the work was performed under such disadvantageous conditions that it proved a complete failure. The first and only volume, that of items under A, appeared in 1841, and then the scheme was abandoned. The work was a failure, not as regards its methods of dealing with the material, but merely because, from the difficulties attending its production, it did not include all the books it should have included, and was therefore no guide to the A items of the library. But nevertheless this solitary volume was a notable piece of work, because it was the first catalogue compiled on scientific and well-thought-out lines. Panizzi and John Winter Jones, then an assistant in the library, were the leading spirits in the drafting of the Ninety-One Rules on which it was based, and these rules have ever since formed the foundation of all scientific book-catalogues. To use Dr Garnett's picturesque expression, they are "the Magna Charta of cataloguing."

Henceforth Panizzi steadfastly set his face against a printed catalogue of the general library.

In 1845 Panizzi presented to the Trustees an account of the printed books in the library in a "Private and Confidential" Report. He gave a

short sketch of the history of the library, and of its arrangements, and offered suggestions as to its further extension. By a masterly comparison of the books in the various branches of literature in the Museum, with other collections, private and public, and by reference to standard bibliographies and to catalogues of important libraries, he showed the many lacunæ in our national collection. A large sum of learning, general as well as bibliographical, went to the making of this Report.

Of Bibles, the Museum then possessed only 389 to a certain private collector's 906. The books of Biblical criticism numbered 67, while Harvard owned 106.

Of English Liturgies there were but 33 out of 84 named in Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*. A few years previously, when it was desired to find out whether the Office for the Healing had appeared in any English Prayer Book since the accession of the House of Hanover, no such Prayer Book was to be found in the national collection, but in a private library there were at least four editions in which this Office was included.

In scholastic theology the Museum could show only 20 works to Sion College's 45.

As regards natural sciences, the library was nearly perfect, and the Trustees had done their best to keep it up to this pitch of excellence.

The music collection showed large gaps, and notwithstanding the collections of Sir J. Hawkins and

Dr Burney, the Museum owned but 22 works out of the 94 named in Lichtenal's *Bibliografia della Musica*. As regards musical compositions its plight was worse, for the English publishers were not ashamed to evade the Copyright Act by sending to Stationers' Hall a title-page only, or an imperfect proof, or an odd number. In foreign music the deficiencies were amazing—nothing of Handel's, nothing of Mozart's, nothing of Beethoven's or Rossini's. While the Report was being prepared, however, Arnold's edition of Handel's works, on large paper, subscribed for by George III., and the works of Palestrina lately published in Rome, had been added.

The French History collections were very satisfactory, and those concerning the French Revolution were almost as complete as they could be. But modern French works were very deficient.

Although the older specimens of English literature were extensive and valuable, books such as the first editions of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Byron, Scott, etc., etc., were wanting altogether.

Even while the Report was being drawn up, the question of how to provide more space and shelf-room was already pressing, and Panizzi again pointed out the desirability, if not the necessity, of dividing the Museum collections, and of housing the natural history and the art departments in different buildings. As regards the natural history exhibits, his suggestion was carried out thirty-five years later (see Ch. VIII.).

The result of Panizzi's Report was the grant by the Treasury of an allowance of £10,000 a year for the express purpose of remedying deficiencies and completing the library. The great increase in the library under Panizzi's administration was due partly to this grant and partly to his stern enforcement of the Copyright Act.

Panizzi arrived at the conclusion that the Copyright Acts, by which the Museum was entitled to receive a copy of every book published, had frustrated their own purpose of supplying the national collection with current English books. It was presumed that they fulfilled that purpose and rendered other sources of supply unnecessary, but as a matter of fact these Acts were largely evaded or ignored. Relying on the observance of the law, too, Parliament, up to 1832, had forbidden the purchase of English books by the Museum. Thus the library was left poor in the very department where it should have been opulent.

This "special and disagreeable duty," as Panizzi called it, of enforcing the observance of the Act of 1842, was transferred in 1850 from the Secretary, to whom it properly belonged, to Panizzi, who was voted a yearly gratuity for his services. He gave notice to the publishers that the provisions of the Act were to be enforced, and arrears to be claimed. Failing to secure an entirely satisfactory response, he next had recourse to compulsion. The late Mr Bohn was one who showed himself particularly rebellious, and

seventeen different summonses were taken out against him. The court upheld the Museum rights, though only nominal penalties were imposed. But most of the publishers resigned themselves to the inevitable and sent in their books. In 1852 the number of articles sent in was 13,934. In 1854 it was 19,578.

When Panizzi became Keeper of the Printed Books, in 1837, the British Museum Library stood seventh on the list of the great European libraries. By 1859 it had risen to the second place, and was inferior only to the Bibliothèque Impériale. Between 1837 and 1851 its contents were nearly doubled, and after 1851 they increased by 27,000 yearly.

Panizzi's administration was also marked by the amount of work done to bring order into the other library departments. The music, the maps, the Chinese books, and an enormous mass of pamphlets, were all catalogued and made available for use, and every volume of the King's Library was given a distinguishing mark. But the monument by which Panizzi is best remembered by the Museum student is the great Reading-room (see Ch. VII.). It was built after his own design, and he superintended the whole work down to the minutest detail, though for the dome, and other æsthetic details, the credit rests with the architect, Sydney Smirke.

Before the room was finished, Panizzi had succeeded Sir Henry Ellis, who retired in 1856, as Principal Librarian, and its completion in 1857 was the chief event during his tenure of that office. In the

same year the gallery containing the King's Library was made public. It had previously been opened to general visitors only during the Great Exhibition of 1851.

On Panizzi's appointment to the highest office in the Museum the standing Committee of Trustees drew the Government's attention to the great services he had rendered to the institution, and to the extension of its means of instructing and accommodating the public, and especially commended his inventiveness and energy in planning the new Library and Reading-room, with the efficient assistance of the architect. The Trustees considered the Reading-room to be without a rival on the Continent.

Panizzi retired in 1866, and three years later was made a K.C.B. He had previously declined a knighthood on the ground that he was unwilling to be the object of a further mark of royal favour, which might "attract too much publick attention to one like himself, a foreigner by birth, who will be considered by many to have already received too high a reward for his exertions." He died in 1879. His bust by Marochetti stands over the inner entrance to the Reading-room of the library of which he was one of the most able and devoted servants.

Panizzi's letters and papers, filling sixteen heavy volumes, were purchased by the Museum in 1892, but by order of the Trustees they were not made accessible to the public until ten years later. They contain comparatively little concerning Museum matters,

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and practically nothing of interest about the library, but are largely concerned with Italian politics and trivial literary affairs. They include correspondence with many notable men both at home and abroad.

VII

LATER DAYS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BY 1845 the present south front, replacing old Montagu House, had been added, with the north and west wings, thus forming, with the King's Library, a hollow square. The total spent on these buildings, from 1823 to 1850, was £696,000. Yet even these additions were not adequate. Before 1845 the Library was calling for more space, and by 1850 the Reading-room (now the Music and Catalogue Rooms) was crowded and uncomfortable. Thomas Carlyle complained that often he could not find a seat, and had to sit on top of a ladder, and, besides, that he never entered the room without getting what he called "the Museum headache." But though the Library was appreciated by the readers, the Museum as a whole was not a popular institution. It was considered to have a formidable rival in the Crystal Palace, then an admired novelty. The exhibits were ill arranged, and very crowded, and Panizzi's suggestion, first made in 1835, and repeated in 1845, to separate the natural history specimens from the rest of the collections, came to be seriously considered.

It was the opinion of some that these might advantageously be removed to "the rising suburb of Albertopolis, South of the Kensington Road," and in 1857 a special committee of the Trustees resolved that it was expedient that the natural history collections be removed from the Museum.

Thereupon arose a clamour. A memorial was presented to the Government strongly protesting against the proposed separation. It was signed by Lord Wrottesley, President of the Royal Society, by Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Owen, Whewell, by the officers of the several natural history departments of the Museum, and by many other scientific men. They asserted that the British Museum, when established by Act of Parliament "in 1755" (*sic*) "was essentially a Natural History Collection"; that natural history students, under present arrangements, had the advantage of being able to consult every work which could help their researches, and that the removal would involve either the transfer of a large part of the library as well, or the costly purchase of a new natural history library. They also stated that the number of visitors who came to the natural history department was larger than to any other part of the Museum.

The memorial merely illustrates the platitude that specialists are apt to overrate the position of their own specialities at the expense of other subjects. The Act of Parliament of 1753 (not 1755), establishing the British Museum, certainly did not contemplate

it as essentially a natural history collection, but as a joining of the Sloane collections of natural history specimens, antiquities, books and manuscripts, with the library already in the national possession and the prospective addition to that library of the great Harleian collection of manuscripts. The Act also tacitly, if not expressly, gave the library the paramount place when it called the officers "librarians" and made the Principal Librarian the chief officer of the institution (see Ch. IV.).

The advantage of having under one roof both the objects of study and the books to assist in that study is in the case of the British Museum merely nominal. At the beginning, objects from the various collections were permitted to be taken to the Reading-room for the convenience of students, but that very soon became impracticable, and obviously so. No reasonable person could now expect any object to be carried out of its own department into the Reading-room, neither could he expect to be allowed to infringe the rule which forbids readers to take books out of the Reading-room. Even in the case of serious students the risk of damage to the national property, and the additional labour thrown on the staff, would prohibit any such arrangements, while the probability, or rather the certainty, of trivial and unreasonable applications, alone would render the granting of such facilities an impossibility.

But there is little practical difficulty for the genuine student, since all departments have their own special

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libraries of standard works on the subject of their respective collections, and all possible assistance is freely and courteously afforded him.

Notwithstanding the protest of the naturalists and men of science, therefore, the arrangements for dividing the Museum collections went forward. A site was acquired at Kensington from the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, on the ground formerly occupied by the Exhibition of 1862, and the new building was begun.

The crying need for more accommodation, both for books and for readers, had now become so insistent that in July, 1854, a Parliamentary grant was made and the building of a new Reading-room and library extension was taken in hand. It was an obvious thing that the quadrangular space about which the Museum buildings were grouped should not be left vacant, and Panizzi was not the first to whom the idea occurred of utilising it as a site for a Reading-room. It was a question whether this space should be given up to a Hall of Sculpture, or to the Reading-room, but the Reading-room and New Library triumphed. Panizzi sketched a rough design for a circular room surrounded by iron galleries, and his plan, with the addition of a dome, was carried out by Sydney Smirke, brother of Sir Robert Smirke.

The room was begun in May, 1854, and finished in May, 1857. It was said by *The Quarterly Review* to be "the only structure erected in London, within the memory of man, which has escaped censure," and

Dean Milman, then one of the Museum Trustees, spoke of it as "the envy and admiration of Europe." The opening was celebrated by a large breakfast-party given by Panizzi in the Reading-room itself, the only occasion when the austere walls of the British Museum have witnessed a social gathering.

The Reading-room is a circular building 106 feet high, with clerestory windows rising above the surrounding libraries. The dome which spans the whole is 140 feet in diameter, and the largest in Europe except that of the Pantheon at Rome, which is two feet wider. The framework of the building is iron, and the dome is supported by twenty piers. So accurately was the work carried out that when the scaffolding of the dome was removed there was no "set" whatever, and when the building was thoroughly overhauled and tested, exactly fifty years later, it was found that the ironwork was as good as ever, and that "scarcely a rivet had failed."

The interior appointments are familiar to many. The walls are covered, as far as the clerestory, with shelves accommodating seventy or eighty thousand books. Two galleries give access to the upper shelves; the lower shelves, which can be reached from the floor of the room, are furnished with reference-books in all branches of knowledge, which readers may freely take down for themselves, without writing tickets or applying to the attendants.

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These books are arranged in the following order of subjects :—

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Theology | Philology |
| Law | Geography |
| Philosophy | British Topography |
| Science | History |
| Art | Biography |
| Bibliography | Heraldry |
| Literary History | Genealogy |
| Poetry | Encyclopædias |
| Drama | Periodicals and |
| Classics (Greek and Latin) | Publications of Learned Societies |

The readers' desks occupy long tables, which radiate like spokes of a wheel from a hub consisting of concentric circular tables; under which are shelves containing the Museum catalogues, general and special, and subject-indexes ; catalogues of other libraries ; indexes to periodicals, various directories and handbooks, *Statutes of the Realm*, *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, etc., etc. The innermost table or counter encloses a slightly raised space, within which is the Superintendent's desk. At the counter attendants are stationed to deal with the tickets for books given in by readers, to receive back books for which tickets have been written, and to answer inquiries.

There are also ten little bookcases placed at intervals round the outer catalogue desk, containing

bibliographies. This arrangement was introduced in 1879.

Each reader's desk is supplied with blotting-pad, fixed inkstand, and penwiper, an adjustable book-rest, and a shelf which folds back when not in use. Paper-weights and paper-knives are also provided. Each long table is divided down the centre by a high partition, which practically ensures the privacy of each student. Between these long tables are shorter ones, provided with pens and ink, but not with partitions or book-rests. Every table is marked by a letter of the alphabet, and every desk by a number. The total number of readers the room will accommodate at once is 458.

As far as possible all unnecessary noise is prevented. The floor is covered with cork-carpeting, which muffles the sound of footsteps ; the tables and desks are substantially padded—the padding also serving the purpose of preserving the books ; the trolleys which convey volumes of the catalogue to and from the catalogue-room work silently on rubber tyres, and a placard requesting that silence shall be observed as far as possible confronts every person who enters.

The arrangements for heating and airing the room are elaborate. Immediately under the floor is a chamber fitted with hot-water pipes, and flues for admitting fresh air. The hot air enters the room through the hollow pedestals of the writing-tables ; the cold air comes through the gratings at the top of the partition running down the centre of each table.

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The windows are double, and by means of pipes the temperature is so regulated that no moisture accumulates on the glass. The lantern of the dome is fitted with apparatus for extracting vitiated air.

Electric light was first used in the room in 1879. The lighting has been gradually improved, and there are now five arc lamps, a glow-light practically to every two readers, and other glow-lights over the catalogue desks and bookshelves.

The room was closed for repairs and decoration for over six months in 1907, and the new scheme of decoration then introduced was white and gold only, which rendered the room much lighter than formerly.

Readers are admitted, on the recommendation of a householder of known position, for a period of six months, the permission being renewable. To obtain a book from the general library the reader must transcribe from the catalogue, on one of the tickets provided, the name of the book and its author, its date and its pressmark. To this ticket he adds his signature, the date, the letter of his table, and the number of his desk, and then places it in a box at the centre counter. He may have to wait for his book from twenty minutes to half-an-hour, or even more, occasionally less, for although by means of telephones and pneumatic tubes, communication and the dispatch of tickets between the different departments of the library has been greatly facilitated, yet the actual space to be traversed before the book can be brought from its press to the reader's table is

often considerable. When the book is taken from the shelf, a label with its name and the name of the reader requiring it, and other particulars, is left in its place. Formerly, these were also entered in a register, but the elimination of this process has resulted in the saving of a considerable aggregate of time in the day.

Everything is done to make the Reading-room of the utmost service to those who use it, and to ensure their comfort. There are no restrictions but such as are imperative for the preservation of the nation's property and the protection of the rights of the readers in general. A student may spend the whole of the day at his desk, with as many books as he chooses, and he may consult the Superintendent in cases of difficulty, meeting always with the courteous attention characteristic of the officers of the Museum in their dealings with the public, and often obtaining valuable assistance in his researches. The same facilities are afforded to the obscure as to the celebrated. Nor are fees exacted for any of the Museum privileges except that of photographing articles in the collection, and this requirement is an innovation of late years introduced on account of the large number of applications received. No gratuity may be given to any servant of the Museum.

But it is desired that only *bona fide* students shall use the Reading-room. Readers whose thirst for knowledge can be slaked at the nearest local library, those who want to consult directories to obtain addresses for circulars, or encyclopædias to enable

them to enter for competitions, or who seek to amuse themselves with novels or magazines, are merely dogs in the manger when they monopolise valuable places in the Reading-room of the national library, and quite literally their room is preferable to their company.

The plan of the New Library is rectangular, and measures 258×184 feet. In the centre is the circular Reading-room, surrounding which, on the outer side, are three concentric circles of book presses. Beyond these circles the presses are disposed in rows, and fill all the available space. Immediately round the Reading-room the presses are four stories high, elsewhere three, and they rise from a basement below the level of the Reading-room floor. The structure is almost entirely of skeleton ironwork, minimising the risk of destruction by fire, and permitting a freer circulation of air than is possible with solidly constructed floors and partitions.

The galleries of the New Library were fitted originally with five and twenty miles of shelving, holding, roughly, a million and a half of books. But in less than thirty years this accommodation was exhausted, and the problem of how to enlarge the library further again pressed urgently for solution. At Bethnal Green Library one day Dr Garnett noticed a device which struck him as eminently useful, and this device, modified to suit Museum requirements, became the sliding-press—a simple but effective means of providing for almost unlimited

extension of book-space. It was adopted by Mr (afterwards Sir) E. A. Bond, Principal Librarian, 1878-1888. It consists of a supplementary bookcase or press, containing rows of shelves back and front, which is hung in front of the stationary press, and works on overhead wheels backward and forward. It can be pushed back flat against the stationary press, and pulled out when books have to be taken from one or the other. On the basement floor the sliding-presses run on the ground instead of being suspended, and are used for specially large and heavy volumes. The Museum Library—the New Library more particularly—being primarily for storing books, and not, like the library of a private house, serving a decorative as well as a literary purpose, it does not matter if the face of a bookcase is doubled in this way. It was estimated that by means of the sliding-presses the accommodation of the New Library could be more than doubled. The cost is small—small, that is, in comparison with the expense of erecting a new building.

VIII

RECENT HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

PANIZZI was succeeded in the office of Principal Librarian, in 1866, by John Winter Jones, Keeper of Printed Books, whose administration was not marked by any salient event. Winter Jones retired in 1878, and was followed by (Sir) Edward A. Bond, Keeper of the Manuscripts, who brought about various changes and reforms made necessary by the growth of the institution.

Mr Bond's first achievement was to initiate the printing of the General Catalogue of Printed Books (see Ch. XI.). He also caused the Museum to be opened to the public daily instead of reserving three days in the week for students only. In 1879 the White Wing, on the south-east side, was added to the Museum buildings, from funds bequeathed by William White in 1833, subject to the life interest of his widow. This wing, when completed, contained newspaper rooms and additions to the Department of Manuscripts, besides other extensions not connected with the library.

In 1880-1883 the great step was taken of removing

the natural history collections to a new museum in Cromwell Road, South Kensington, where they could obtain the justice they deserve, and receive accessions without embarrassment. An Act had been passed (1878) empowering the Trustees to remove the collections relating to Zoology, Geology, Palæontology, Mineralogy and Botany "to a building in course of erection at Kensington, there to remain and be preserved for public use to all posterity," and the British Museum (Natural History) was opened to the public on 18th April 1881. The galleries at Bloomsbury left vacant by the transfer were immediately filled with antiquities hitherto meanly lodged in the basement.

The Reading-room accommodation was now becoming extremely inadequate to the demands made upon it, and a fear was expressed that persons engaged in genuine research would be crowded out by readers seeking merely general information. It was suggested that a separate room should be provided, as at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, for those whose needs could be satisfied by ordinary modern reference works, in default of limiting admission to those who came for the purposes of research. During the first six months after the Reading-room was opened the number of readers averaged 398 daily. Thirty-one years later they averaged 622 daily. To relieve the pressure, the newspapers and Parliamentary Papers were removed to the White Wing, and had a reading-room specially

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allotted to them. Restrictions also were placed on the reading of novels. Novels less than five years old cannot now be obtained in the Reading-room without special permission from the Superintendent.

Further storage space was made when by the authority of Acts of Parliament of 1767 and 1807 Mr (afterwards Sir) Edward Maunde Thompson (Principal Librarian, 1888-1909) withdrew from the library all duplicates not needed for Museum use. These were presented to other public libraries throughout the country. The duplicate works on botany had already been transferred to the Natural History Museum.

In 1900 a Bill was brought forward to empower the Trustees to deposit copies of local newspapers received by them since 1837 with local authorities in England and Scotland, and to oblige such authorities to make provision for housing the files. It also proposed to authorise the destruction or rejection of any printed matter received which was not worth preserving.

But the Bill was promoted by the Treasury rather than by the Museum authorities—that is to say, for financial reasons rather than for the welfare of the Museum library—and it provoked so much disapproval that it was withdrawn. No one could wish to see the library collections, even of newspapers, scattered over the kingdom, and the destruction of apparently worthless ephemeral and miscellaneous matter might prove a serious loss to the antiquary of the future.

The newspapers, however, were undeniably a bulky and tiresome part of the library ; so two years later land was acquired at Hendon, in Middlesex, seven or eight miles distant, and the British Museum Act, 1902, authorised the erection of a building there in which might be stored newspapers and other printed matter not in general use, provided that they were made accessible to the public at Bloomsbury on due notice being given. This repository was begun in 1903, and two years later was ready to receive 48,000 volumes of English provincial newspapers, and Scottish and Irish journals. The interleaved copy of the *Newspaper Catalogue* at Hendon in this year filled eleven volumes.

The new library and galleries on the north side, recently completed, were begun in April, 1906, the late Mr Vincent Stuckey Lean having in 1899 left £50,000 chiefly for the extension of the library. This sum was augmented by a Treasury grant of £150,000 under the Public Buildings Expenses Act. The new wing is called King Edward the Seventh's Galleries. It occupies the sites of houses acquired by purchase in 1895, and consists of a basement and sub-ground floor, for storage ; ground-floor galleries for library extension, a mezzanine for studies, etc., and above, a range of exhibition galleries. The architect is Mr J. J. Burnet, who has designed a very dignified and handsome north front, worthy of the rest of the building.

The foundation-stone of the new buildings was

laid by King Edward VII., who was accompanied by the Queen, on 27th June 1907, in the presence of the principal Trustees. As Prince of Wales, King Edward had himself held the office of Trustee.

On 7th May 1914, the new galleries were opened by King George V., who was accompanied by the Queen and Princess Mary. The ceremony took place in the North Library, when the Archbishop of Canterbury read an address to the King summarising the history of the Museum. In his reply, the King spoke of the pride he felt in the Museum, as a former Trustee of this great national institution. "The new galleries which we are met to open to-day," said his Majesty, "form a worthy addition to one of the noblest public buildings of my capital. They will enable your ever-growing collections to be displayed to more advantage, and will provide better accommodation for students and for the work of the staff, and will thus, I trust, extend and enhance the influence of the Museum as one of the chief educational agencies of the world."

The day was unhappily marred by the sudden death, at the Museum, of Mr A. W. K. Miller. Mr Miller had been an officer of the British Museum since 1870, and in 1896 was appointed Assistant Keeper of the Printed Books. From 1890 onwards he edited the General Catalogue.

During the rebuilding of the North Library the "Large Room" readers—*i.e.* those who wished to consult books too valuable to be sent into the

Reading-room—were accommodated in the old Reading-room at the east end of the north wing.

The latter days of the library have been uneventful, though the collections are steadily increasing, being added to yearly, partly by purchase, partly by benefactions from public-spirited persons. But in the official Return made in 1905 it was pointed out that the continual rise in prices—very largely due, no doubt, to American competition—makes it increasingly difficult for the Museum to acquire rarities, especially illuminated manuscripts or original literary autographs, and that for such as these it must more and more depend on gifts and bequests.

Baron Ferdinand Rothschild's bequest of illuminated manuscripts—some exceedingly fine—was received in 1899. In 1910 the Huth Bequest was received (see pp. 130-133). This is the most important addition of manuscripts and printed books acquired by the Museum since the bequest of the Grenville Library in 1847.

The Music Department has recently been enriched by the King's loan of the royal Musical Library from Buckingham Palace. This great collection, numbering about 1000 manuscripts and 3000 printed books, is now deposited in the Museum, and will be housed in a special room of the new wing. In accordance with the will of William IV.—that the books of the royal palaces shall on no pretence

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whatever be alienated from the Crown—this collection remains Crown property, but it is the King's wish that it shall be accessible to the public on the same terms as the rest of the Museum Library. Another addition to the Music Department, made in 1914, consisted of a collection of autograph scores by great composers, deposited on loan by the Royal Philharmonic Society. The Museum has published a catalogue of these manuscripts.

Of late years special attention has been paid to the perfecting of the incunabula—that is, of the books printed in the fifteenth century, when the art of printing was in the cradle. The Museum collection is now one of the first, if not the first, in the world. It includes over 9000 specimens, exclusive of duplicates, notable even more for their rarity than for their number. A detailed *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth century now in the British Museum* is in progress. The first classification of this collection was made by the late Mr Robert Proctor, of the Department of Printed Books, who had the remarkable gift of remembering all the different incunabula he had once seen and of being able to visualise them at will—a faculty of infinite value in such exacting work.

An interesting and useful feature of the work of the library has been the arrangement of special exhibitions of manuscripts and books, together with prints and medals when these are available, to illustrate matters of topical interest. Among the

events thus illustrated or celebrated have been the Fourth Centenary of Luther (1883), the Quicentenary of Wyckliffe (1884), the History of Music, in connection with the International Exhibition of Inventions (1885), the Commemoration of the Domesday Survey (1886), the Invention of Short-hand (1887), the History of the House of Stuart, (1888), the History of Printing (1901), the Alfred the Great Millenary (1901), the Coronation (1902), the Nelson Centenary (1905), and the Tercentenary of the Authorised Version of the Bible (1911).

Happily there has been no catastrophe to chronicle in the history of our national library, save the disastrous fire at Ashburnham House, in 1731, which destroyed part of the Cottonian collection. Fire, War and Neglect are the three enemies which have wrought havoc among books in all ages, but from the beginning the authorities of the British Museum have taken such careful precautions against danger of any kind that the Museum collections have never been seriously threatened.

At first the Museum was guarded at night by two watchmen, who were stationed in the lodge at the great gate, and charged to make the rounds, in turn, every hour. They were specially enjoined to look to the back of the house, which, lying open to the garden and the fields beyond, was exposed to risk of depredations. The watchmen, however, were not very trustworthy or zealous, and in 1808 they were replaced by a military guard, which was

employed till 29th December 1863. The guards' duties included the keeping of order by day at the entrance and in the courts and garden, and they were expected to use their utmost exertions in case of fire, riot, or other danger.

The fear of fire has always been present with those responsible for the safety of the Museum. From the first it was forbidden to bring naked lights within the buildings. When lights were necessary they were carried in lanterns which had been lighted outside, and locked, and the keys of which had been left outside also. The one exception to this rule was made when the standing Committee of Trustees met at night. Candles were provided for them, but as soon as the meeting was over the Secretary in person had to see that the candles and fire were safely extinguished. When Professor Maskelyne was Keeper of the Mineralogical collection he caused great alarm by using a spirit-lamp and blowpipe for the purpose of some scientific experiments in his study, and he was ordered to abandon them, as such practices were entirely against the statutes. The lanterns used in the Museum are still locked, when lighted, and the fires in the old-fashioned grates in the studies and offices are shut in by iron guards of close-meshed wire. The whole building has been built as fire-proof as possible, and the roof is fitted with fire-proof partitions. The use of the electric light in the galleries and reading-rooms—a privilege granted only of late years—

is made with caution and precaution. Smoking within the Museum or its precincts is sternly forbidden. Fire-hose and hydrants, of course, are fixed at all convenient spots, and by means of mains on the roofs water can be thrown right over the dome of the Reading-room.

Bells are fitted throughout the building so that alarm can be given at once in case of fire or of any untoward event which renders it necessary to warn the attendants or to close the gates.

At the time of the Gordon Riots, in 1780, troops were stationed in the Museum garden, and old prints exist showing the encampment. Cowtan, an assistant in the Library under Panizzi's administration, has left an entertaining account of the precautions taken against an attack by the Chartists in 1848. When it was known that the agitators were to gather in Russell Square, hard by, the Temple of the Muses turned garrison. All the staff, high and low, were sworn in as special constables. A military detachment of fifty-seven men and two officers, with twenty Chelsea pensioners, reinforced the Museum levies. Arms and three days' provisions were laid in. All entrances save the main gate were strongly barricaded, and no stranger was permitted to pass the military guard at the lodge. But, to the disappointment, no doubt, of the gallant defenders, nothing happened. Not a Chartist lifted a finger against the Museum.

In 1912 the outrages on public buildings committed

by some fanatics for the purpose of influencing public opinion in favour of the political enfranchisement of women, led to the closing of the Museum to the general public. The Reading-room and Library; however, remained available for students, as even "militant suffragist" readers might be presumed to value their unique privileges too highly to forfeit them by misbehaviour. When the Museum was again opened, a new rule was made—namely, that all bags and muffs capable of concealing weapons of offence were to be shown to an attendant.

Since the outbreak of war, precautions have been taken against damage by hostile aircraft, and specially valuable books and other objects have been removed to safes and strong rooms.

When the King Edward VII. galleries were begun, ten years ago, a fear was expressed that it was dangerous to allow any part of the Museum to abut on the street without the protection of an intervening space and railings, in case of an attack by an excited mob. Mob-risings are rare in this country, but nevertheless it is satisfactory that the new buildings stand some yards back from the roadway, and will be protected by heavy iron railings.

That the British Museum Library is paramount among all the libraries within the Empire is accepted as a matter of course, but there has always been an inclination, prompted more by patriotism, probably, than by a pure desire for knowledge, to make comparisons between the French national library and

our own, with a view to discovering which is the greater.

It must be admitted that in the earlier part of the last century the Bibliothèque Royale was undoubtedly far superior in its number of books to the library of the British Museum. Indeed, it was the first library in the world. But as regards administration, cataloguing, and the facilities afforded to readers, the British Museum has always been foremost.

The number of books in a large library is always difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain, and one collection cannot be exactly measured against another because no uniform method of enumeration has been decided upon. The books in a library, consisting, say, of : (a) a volume entitled *Tracts*, and containing twelve different pamphlets on twelve different subjects, and (b) the Chinese *Encyclopædia*, filling 745 volumes, might be counted in three different ways :

1. As 2 books (1 book of Tracts and 1 Encyclopædia).
2. As 13 books (13 titles).
3. As 746 books (746 volumes).

Thus in dealing with vast collections, probably the length of shelving occupied would be a safer basis of comparison. As far as can be ascertained, however, the Museum has now the advantage in point of numbers. It is reckoned to possess between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000 printed books to the Bibliothèque Nationale's 3,500,000. Its catalogues and service remain incomparable.

According to the enumeration published in 1912; the contents of the Museum Library then occupied forty-six miles of shelves, and stood approximately as follows :—

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Volumes of MSS. | 50,500 |
| Charters and Rolls | 76,000 |
| Greek and Latin Papyri | 1,900 |
| Printed Books | 3,500,000 to 4,000,000. |

The following additions have since been made :—

| | In 1913 | In 1914 |
|---|---------|---------|
| MSS. | 152 | 375 |
| Charters and Rolls | 1,290 | 860 |
| Greek and Latin Papyri | 3 | 37 |
| Printed Books (complete) | 38,116 | 32,539 |
| Printed Books (in progress, exclusive of Maps, Music, and Newspapers) | 78,597 | 71,831 |

Figures for 1915 are not yet available.

War economy has now (1916) dictated the temporary closing of the Museum at Bloomsbury. The Library remains in use, but the service is restricted, and the projected reissue of the General Catalogue of Printed Books is indefinitely postponed. The Roll of Honour in the entrance-hall proclaims that the goodly heritage of the Past only renders more compelling the bugle-call of the Present.

IX

ACCESSIONS BY GIFT, BEQUEST OR PURCHASE

THE national library began, as we have seen, with the gift of the Cottonian collection, to which some additions were afterwards made. These, with the Sloane Manuscripts and Books, were all united as part of the British Museum at its establishment in 1753, and the bequest of the Madox Manuscripts was received as an addition to the Cottonian Library in 1756. Since then there has been practically no distinction between additions to the Cottonian Library and accessions to the British Museum Departments of Manuscripts and Printed Books. Accessions by gift, bequest or purchase have been many: some of the greater are tabulated on pp. 206-208, but smaller items, though often relatively of equal importance, are too numerous for inclusion in the list. Of the larger collections received the following are of outstanding interest, or have histories which it is worth while to recall.

§ 1. THE ROYAL LIBRARY

In June, 1757, the Trustees of the British Museum were informed that King George II. "had been

graciously pleased to give orders for a Bill to be prepared for his Royal Signature, to be passed under the Great Seal, for a donation to the Trustees of the British Museum of all that his Royal library or libraries, with the appurtenances whatsoever, now deposited in the Old Dormitory at Westminster." In the preamble to the deed of gift, the monarch who saw no good in "bainting and boetry" declared that "the encouragement of all arts and the advancement of science constitute one essential part of the true wisdom and greatness of a king," and affirmed his desire that the Royal Library "should not only be made useful to the present times, but be preserved and transmitted for the good of posterity under the care of public trustees."

The same document credits the origin of the Royal Library to James I., but the collection embraces books gathered by the sovereigns of England from at latest the reign of Henry VII., when the library first became of any importance. And it is hardly to be doubted that the English kings had always possessed a library of sorts, even in Saxon days, though the references to it are few and fragmentary. The catalogue of Athelstan's books still exists, and is preserved among the Cottonian Manuscripts. Edward I. had eleven books. In the Close Rolls, 1252, there is an incidental reference to the "custos librorum regis," the keeper of the king's books. Edward IV.'s collection, when moved from London to Eltham, filled four boxes. There is an account, dated 1416;

for velvet and satin for covering the books of Henry V.

Henry VII., led on the one hand by the spirit of the Renaissance and on the other by his natural love of art and letters, enriched his library with a magnificent collection of the beautiful vellum books published by Antoine Vérard of Paris, and did not grudge paying for them, as the Privy Purse accounts show. "To a Frensheman, for certaine bookes, fifty-six pounds four shillings." "To Antony Verard, for two bookes called the Gardyn of Helthe (1502), six pounds," and so on. These books were lodged at Richmond Palace.

Henry VIII. did not disdain to add to the library valuable volumes from the despoiled monasteries, such as an early book of Gospels, given by Athelstan to Christchurch, Canterbury. He distributed his books between his palaces at Richmond, Westminster and St James's.

In the fury against the old service-books that was shown at the Reformation, not only were those in common use destroyed by authority, but even those in the King's library at Westminster were hunted out and done away with. Under Edward VI. this library was purged of all "masse-bookes, legendes, and other superstitious books," by an Order in Council.

The catalogue of the books then at Westminster still exists. Divinity, classics, and law form the chief subjects, but lighter matters were included as well,

such as a manuscript book of *Balades*, the *Roman de la Rose*, the works of Boccaccio and of Froissart, and the poems of Marot. The *Primer ad Usum Sarum*, the Pricke-song booke of Masses and Anthems, the “Primer gilded and covered with velvet, another Primer bound in leather and gorgeously gilded, and a manuscript Primer covered with cloth of gold,” probably perished under the ordinance above mentioned.

The books continued scattered among the various Royal residences at Windsor, Greenwich, Whitehall, Westminster and elsewhere. In Queen Elizabeth's time the library at Whitehall was described as well stored with books in Greek, Latin, French and Italian, all bound in red velvet, with gold and silver clasps ; some were decorated with pearls and jewels. All the English royal collectors appreciated handsome bindings, and so their books wore coats of orange velvet embroidered with gold cord, of green velvet inlaid with satin and embroidered with pearls, of crimson velvet with corners, clasps and centre-pieces of enamelled gold, as well as of richly tooled calf and morocco, deerskin and sheepskin.

James I. was one of the most bookish of our sovereigns. He added to the library the collection made by his son Henry, Prince of Wales, who died in 1612, including the Prince's own copy of *Basilicon Doron*, the work written for him by his father. But he also gave permission to Sir Thomas Bodley to choose whatever of the Royal books he liked for the

newly founded Bodleian Library, at Oxford. At this time the collection of Henry VII. was still kept at Richmond and called by his name.

In the reign of Charles I. a very valuable and famous book was received by gift from the Patriarch of Constantinople. This was the *Codex Alexandrinus*. The Patriarch intended it as a present to James I., but it did not reach this country until after James's death (see p. 173).

At the establishment of the Commonwealth all the goods of "the late King, Queen, and Prince" were ordered to be sold, but an exception was presently made by Parliament in the case of the Royal Library at St James's. St James's Palace was now considered as one of the houses belonging to the Commonwealth, and the Council of State was enjoined by Parliament to take care of the "Publique Library" there. It was evidently looked upon as valuable, for the injunction to the Council concerning it was made three times. It was now augmented by the Whitehall books, and at the Restoration Charles II. found the library undiminished and unharmed. He added to it the Theyer collections, notable as containing the commonplace books of Archbishop Cranmer and the books of Llanthony Abbey. These latter had descended to the Theyers through the sister of the last Abbot of Llanthony, who married a member of that family. But the chief increase of the library in this reign was largely due to the Act of 1662 "For Preventing Abuses in Printing," which ordered a copy

of every book printed, or reprinted with additions, in the English dominions, to be sent to the King and also to the two Universities. Later, Dr Bentley, Royal Librarian, found that this Act was very little observed, and by the measures he took to enforce it he added nearly a thousand volumes to the Library.

Dr Bentley's proposal to make the Royal Library a public one has already been noticed. Although his scheme was not acted upon, it may have been due to his influence that Queen Anne, in 1708, sent the library from St James's to join Sir Robert Cotton's at Cotton House, when the Cottonian collection became national property. The two remained together and shared the same vicissitudes until removed to Montagu House, on the establishment of the British Museum.

When George II., possibly following Queen Anne's intention, definitely transferred the Royal Library to the nation, he transferred with it the privilege conferred by the Act of 1662 of receiving a copy, of the largest and best paper, of every book entered at the Hall of the Company of Stationers. Such books were delivered in quires, unbound, and all books subsequently received by the nation under this privilege were distinguished by a rose and crown stamped on the binding. The practice of marking the binding ceased at the passing of the Copyright Act of 1814, which conferred on the British Museum its own right to a copy of every book printed in the kingdom. The royal privilege thus fell into abeyance. It is

possible that the Museum might claim two copies of every book, if the authorities cared to do so. It does not itself need duplicate copies, but they could be given, perhaps, by special arrangement, to some other library at home or overseas.

The books collected in the several reigns were formerly kept separate, under the names of the respective sovereigns, but when the Royal Library came to the British Museum this arrangement, somewhat unfortunately, was no longer observed.

§ 2. THE THOMASON TRACTS

In 1762 George III. made an important gift to the British Museum Library. This was the remarkable collection of books, pamphlets and news-sheets of the period of the Civil War, known as the Thomason Tracts. It comprises about 30,000 books and tracts, uniformly bound in what originally numbered some 2000 volumes. Twenty-nine volumes are now missing.

This collection was begun in 1640, at the time of the meeting of the Long Parliament, by George Thomason, a bookseller carrying on business at the sign of the Rose and Crown in St Paul's Churchyard. Some romantic stories have gathered round this work of Thomason's, and were first circulated in a broadsheet advertisement issued probably by Samuel Mearne, into whose hands the collection subsequently passed, when he tried to sell it. It was said that

Charles I., being anxious to see a certain pamphlet, and hearing that no copy was to be found except at Thomason's, ordered his coach and drove to the Rose and Crown. Then and there he perused the pamphlet and commended Thomason, giving him ten pounds for his encouragement, and desiring him to continue the collection. Thomason accordingly set himself to keep the pamphlets up to date and complete, but found the task so unexpectedly troublesome that he would have abandoned it had it not been for the King's request. It lay a heavy burden on himself and his assistants for above twenty years, "during which time he buried three of them, who took great pains both day and night with him in that tedious employment." Then, fearful lest Cromwell should hear of the books and confiscate them, Thomason sent them on journeys for the purpose of baffling any inquirers. "When the Army was Northwards, he pack'd them up in several Trunks, and by one or two in a Week sent them to a trusty friend in Surry, who safely preserv'd them; and when the Army was Westward, and fearing their Return that way; they were sent to London again; but the Collector durst not keep them, but sent them into Essex, and so accordingly as they lay near Danger, still, by timely removing them, at a great Change, secur'd them." After they came from Essex, Thomason planned to send them either to Scotland or to Holland—it is not clear which—but fearing after all to trust them to a sea journey, had tables made with false tops, in

which he concealed them in his warehouse. But these stories are not supported by such evidence as is available.

On the fly-leaf of one of the books in the collection, a volume containing fourteen different articles, is a note in Thomason's handwriting, stating that in 1647 Charles I. wished to see a certain pamphlet which could not be obtained anywhere. It being reported to the King that Thomason was making a collection of the literature of the day, the King's messengers came to inquire of him concerning the pamphlet, and, if he had it, to ask the loan of it for his Majesty. Thomason replied that all that he had was at the King's service, but that if he lent this book and lost it, it could not be replaced, and his collection "would lose a limb." The King was informed accordingly, and sent the messengers back to say that "upon the worde of a King he would safely return it," whereupon Thomason gave up the book. It was duly returned to him, with a message from the King desiring him to continue the collection he had begun. The King had let the volume fall in the mud, and the stain is still to be seen.

Dr G. K. Fortescue, who prepared the official catalogue of the Thomason collection, says, that as this particular volume consists mainly of newspapers, sermons and satirical pamphlets, "it may be assumed that the tract Charles I. wished to see was either *The Reasons of the Lords and Commons, why they cannot agree to the alteration and Addition*

in the Articles of Cessation offered by His Majesty. With His Majestie's gratiouse answer thereunto. April 4, 1643, or, A Declaration concerning the present Treaty of Peace between His Majesty and Parliament, April 7, 1643." This, then, is the authentic version of the story of Charles I.'s use of the Thomason collection.

As for the tales of the travels into Surrey and Essex for fear of confiscation by the Protector's minions, it is difficult to know how much credence to give them. It would be strange if they were pure fabrications, yet no obvious reason appears why such a collection should have excited Cromwell's animosity ; it was quite impartially made, without any political bias, and aimed only at completeness. But it seems clear that for some reason or other a feigned sale was ultimately made to the University of Oxford, probably while Thomason was in prison on account of his share in the Love conspiracy of 1651. To Oxford, therefore, the books were sent, and remained there in the case of Dr Barlow, Bodley Librarian. Thomason, meanwhile, after his release from prison, continued his work of collecting.

Dr Barlow recognised that the collection was unique, and that it ought to be made accessible to " learned and sober men." He considered that it should be added either to the King's Library or to the Bodleian, or to some public library, and, had funds permitted, he would have bought it for the Bodleian.

A manuscript memorandum in one of the volumes,

written 24th March 1658/9, shows that at one time Thomason was so weary of his work that he decided to abandon it. " March 24. This day," he says, " I did cease my elaborate Collection, because the number was soe exceedinge few and inconsiderable and not worth my labour, and the yeare 1658 beginning to-morrow I did prefer to put an end to my great paynes and charges." However, he continued the collection till 1661.

When Thomason died, in 1666, his collection was still at Oxford. His will directed that it should be sold for his children's benefit, and Dr Barlow, on being made Bishop of Lincoln, asked George Thomason the younger to relieve him of the care of it. The next that is heard of it is that it was in the possession of Samuel Mearne, the King's Stationer, who was trying to sell it, and who probably issued the interesting but somewhat inaccurate broadsheet quoted above, perhaps in 1685. The broadsheet may be taken as a piece of sensational advertising. There was some talk of the books being bought by Sir Joseph Williamson for the Royal Library, but the negotiations failed.

The collection remained in the hands of Mearne's descendants till it was bought by the Earl of Bute, and purchased from him by George III. and presented to the nation in 1761, to be kept, with the Royal Library already in the Museum, for the use of the public.

The Thomason Tracts form an almost complete

collection of the books, pamphlets, newspapers and broadsheets, political, religious or literary, published in London between 1640 and 1661. It also includes some provincial and foreign publications.

Thomason, as a collector, has been stigmatised as "utterly indiscriminating," but it is the fact that he did not attempt to discriminate, but aimed instead at completeness, that makes his collection of such importance. Moreover, it was made from a historical and not from a bibliographical standpoint, and while Thomason tried to include every work published within the period referred to, he did not necessarily strive after every impression of those works.

Some of the broadsheets bear a note in Thomason's handwriting, stating that they had been scattered in the London streets during the night.

Mearne's advertisement, if it was Mearne's, rightly estimated the value of the pamphlets in stating that "they may be of very great Use to any Gentleman concerned in Publick Affairs both for this Present, and After Ages, there being not the like in the World, neither is it possible to make such a collection." This testimony was echoed nearly two centuries later by Thomas Carlyle, who had largely used the Thomason papers in writing his *Oliver Cromwell*. He stated that he found them "most invaluable." "In value, I believe," he told the committee on the British Museum in 1848, "the whole world could not parallel them." They were "greatly preferable to

all the sheepskins in the Tower, and other places, for informing the English what the English were in former times. I believe the whole secret of the seventeenth century is involved in that hideous mass of rubbish there."

The "hideous mass of rubbish" includes not only the ephemeral publications of the Commonwealth period, transcripts of Royalist writings which none dared publish, and Cromwell's letters and dispatches, but first editions of Milton's *Areopagitica*, 1664, with MS. note—"Ex dono authoris"—Herrick's *Hesperides*, 1648, Εἰκων Βασιλικη, 1648, and Milton's reply, Εἰκονοκλαστης, 1649, Lovelace's *Lucasta*, 1649, Walton's *Compleat Angler*, 1653, and copies of other famous works of that time. Among the newspapers are *The Parliament Scout*, *Mercurius Britannicus*, *The Scottish Dove*, *The Man in the Moon*, *The Spie*, *The True Informer*, *The Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer*, *The London Post*, etc., etc.

Thomason catalogued every item most minutely, and arranged them in chronological order, marking most with even the very day of issue. His catalogue is in manuscript, and fills 12 volumes folio, but its value is diminished by its arbitrary division of the books according to their sizes. The British Museum has issued a printed chronological catalogue, with a subject index—prefaced by a full history of the collection—which makes the contents of the collection easily ascertainable (*The Thomason Tracts*, by G. K. Fortescue. 2 vols. 1908).

§ 3. THE KING'S LIBRARY

To fill the gap left by George II.'s gift of the old Royal Library to the nation, George III. set to work to build up another, as it was not seemly that the sovereign should have no books. As a foundation he purchased, in 1762, at a cost of £10,000, the collection made by Joseph Smith, British Consul at Venice.

Smith's collection was rich in fine and early editions of Latin, French, and Italian authors. In 1727 he compiled a catalogue, limited to twenty-five copies, of his rarest books, and a catalogue of the whole library was printed at Venice in 1755. George III. made a great point of extending this collection, and for some fifty years he spent £2000 a year upon it. He sent his librarian, Mr (afterwards Sir) Frederick Barnard, to travel on the Continent in search of rare and desirable books, and Dr Johnson, who was allowed to use the library, and took great interest in it, wrote Barnard a letter of advice as to how best to fulfil his errand. (See Appendix, p. 217.) The suppression of the "Jesuits' houses" and the dispersion of their libraries gave great opportunities for the cheap purchase of rarities—the Florence Homer of 1488, for example, was bought for ten shillings.

The new library also received valuable accessions by way of gifts or bequests from admiring book-lovers, as, for instance, the incunabula collected by Jacob Bryant.

It was at first kept at the Old Palace at Kew, and when the Old Palace was demolished in 1803 it was taken to Buckingham House, where it was placed at the disposal of students with royal liberality. It was now rich in books in all departments of learning: in classics, in English history, in French, Italian and Spanish literature, in geographical and topographical articles, and it possessed a collection of important military plans from very early times upwards. The incunabula were especially noteworthy, and included copies of the Gutenberg or Mainz Bible, the Bamberg Bible, the First and Second Mainz Psalters,¹ and thirty-nine Caxtons, as well as a number of block-books.

In 1820 Sir Frederick Barnard published a catalogue in five folio volumes, *Bibliotheca Regiæ Catalogus*, dedicated to George IV. It is a combination of the author and class systems.

This fine library was coveted by the Emperor Alexander I. of Russia, and George IV., with pitiful lack of patriotism, was on the point of selling it when the proposed transaction came to the knowledge of Lord Farnborough and the noted book-collector, Richard Heber. Through their efforts the King was approached, and persuaded to change his mind and to keep the library in the country by presenting it to the nation. On 15th January 1823 the King wrote to the Earl of Liverpool as follows:—

¹ The First Mainz Psalter was retained when, later, the bulk of the library was transferred to the nation.

“ DEAR LORD LIVERPOOL,—The King, My late revered and excellent Father, having formed during a long series of years a most valuable and extensive Library, consisting of about 120,000¹ volumes, I have resolved to present this collection to the British Nation.

“ Whilst I have the satisfaction by this means of advancing the literature of My Country, I also feel that I am paying a just tribute to the memory of a Parent, whose life was adorned with every public and private virtue.

“ I desire to add, that I have great pleasure, My Lord, in making this communication through you.

“ Believe me, with great regard,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ G. R.

“ PAVILION, BRIGHTON,

“ *January 15th, 1823.*

“ THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL, K.G.”

etc., etc., etc.

Neither in this letter, nor in the Treasury minute thereon, nor in the minutes of the British Museum Trustees, nor on the marble tablet in the King's Library gallery recording the gift, is any mention made of the fact that the royal generosity had required a stimulant before asserting itself. This stimulant took the form of an honorarium secretly provided out of a fund known as the Droits of

¹ This is considered an excessive estimate.

Admiralty, moneys once the perquisites of the Lord High Admiral, but surrendered by Prince George of Denmark, when he was appointed to that office in 1702, for public uses.

The committee appointed to consider George IV.'s gift to the nation, before recommending that it should be added to the library already lodged in the British Museum, first assured themselves that the regulations governing the admittance of students to the British Museum were in accordance with the spirit of the royal gift. They found that these regulations were necessary to the existence of the library, and that for want of similar rules some of the Continental libraries had suffered severely. They also found that in practice the rules were interpreted with the utmost liberality. So, despite some attempt to keep the King's collection in one of the royal residences, where, no doubt, it might have continued as a jewel of the Crown without hindrance to its use by the King's lieges, it was settled that it should be housed with the rest of the national library at Bloomsbury.

The committee sensibly recommended the erection of a new building for this large accession, pointing out that Montagu House was unfitted for public purposes. It was therefore decided that a room should be built specially to receive George IV.'s gift, and that that collection, henceforward to be known as the King's Library, should be for ever kept in it.

To avoid confusion between the Old Royal Library

and the King's Library it may be briefly stated again, though the foregoing sections should have made it clear, that the Old Royal Library was that collected by English sovereigns down to George II., and by him given to the nation in 1757, while the King's Library is that collected by George III., transferred to the country by George IV., in 1823, and removed to the British Museum in 1828, partly from Buckingham House, partly from Kensington Palace.

William IV., finding himself "the only monarch in Europe without a library," collected one, which he settled by will on the Crown. The codicil to this effect, dated 10th July 1833, is in the British Museum, with an autograph confirmation dated 30th November 1834, and signed and sealed by the King, declaring that all the books, drawings and plans collected in the royal palaces "shall for ever continue Heirlooms to the Crown, and on no pretence whatever to be alienated from the Crown" (Additional MS. 30, 170, f. 8).

§ 4. THE CRACHERODE COLLECTION

The Cracherode Collection was received by bequest, in 1799. Its collector, the Rev. C. M. Cracherode, F.R.S., F.S.A. (1730-1799), was a man of wealth, and though he held for a while the curacy of Binsey, near Oxford, he soon abandoned clerical work and retired to a bookworm's seclusion in London. He practically never left town afterwards, nor did he

follow any occupation or indulge in any amusement outside his daily routine of a walk in the Strand or elsewhere to look at old bookshops. He is said to have suffered from painful shyness. His property included an estate held on the condition that in the event of a coronation the tenant should present a cup to the newly crowned sovereign, but his whole life was embittered by the dread that he might be called upon to perform this service.

The books he sought for in his daily walk were those notable for their fine printing or their rarity, combined with perfection of condition. His collection—about 4500 volumes—is comparatively small, but remarkably choice, and specially distinguished by its copies of the classics. It includes examples from the libraries of the great French bibliophile, Jean Grolier, Vicomte d'Aguisy, and that famous Italian collector, Thomasso Maioli, unknown save through his collection of books and the beautiful bindings he provided for them. Among the Cracherode treasures are Grolier's copy of Pliny, printed at Venice by Jenson in 1476; the first edition of *Æsop's Fables*, Milan, c. 1480; Maioli's copy of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice, Aldus, 1499; and Petrarch's *Sonetti e Canzoni*, Venice, Aldus, 1501.

The catalogue of the Cracherode books has never been printed. There are two manuscript copies; one in the Department of Manuscripts—viz. *The Catalogue of Books and Prints bequeathed by*

C. M. Cracherode to the British Museum (Additional MS. 11360)—and a copy made by Ayscough (King's MS. 387).

§ 5. FRENCH HISTORICAL TRACTS, ETC., AND THE JOURSANVAULT MANUSCRIPTS

In 1817 a collection of pieces, now known as the F. Tracts, was purchased from a French collector, and formed the foundation of the British Museum's unrivalled store of literature of the time of and concerning the French Revolution. To these were added, in 1831 and 1856, the collections F.R. and R. Tracts respectively, made by John Wilson Croker. The whole number about 48,579 books, tracts and periodicals. What the Thomason Tracts are to the English Commonwealth period, these French Tracts are to the time of the Terror. Even before the acquisition of the third collection Panizzi was able to state (1845) that the Museum's "great collection of Tracts on the French Revolution seemed to leave little to desire."

A wider period of French history is covered, though not so completely, by a series consisting of 242 volumes containing transcripts of State and official papers chiefly relating to affairs in France, made for Henri Auguste de Loménie, Comte de Brienne, Secretary of State to Louis XIII. These were received from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, in exchange for twenty-two leaves which at some

former time had been removed from certain manuscripts in the Bibliothèque and had found their way into the Harleian collection and so into the Museum. They were returned to the French nation in 1878.

In 1829 the Museum acquired a small but extremely interesting parcel of documents relating to the English rule in France, and apart from their historical value the story of their acquisition is of interest.

It came to the knowledge of the Trustees that the Baron de Joursanvault, of Pomard, near Beaune, was desirous of selling his magnificent collection of historical and genealogical manuscripts. Sir Henry Ellis, then Principal Librarian, visiting Paris on private business, obtained from the French Foreign Minister, the Prince de Polignac, an introduction to the Baron, and extended his journey to Pomard to examine the collection. The *Courier des Electeurs* was enraged at what it considered to be the Prince's perfidy. "Thus," it shrieked, "our history's records, and authentic documents concerning our old vassalage, will be in possession of the English, who will insolently glory in them, and a French ministry makes itself party to such a bargain!"

Sir Henry found the Château of Pomard a large, decayed building in a remote and miserable village. The Baron's price for his library and manuscripts was 111,000 francs, together with a verbal understanding that Sir Henry would obtain for him, through the Duke of Wellington, the French title of Comte, or, if that were impossible, the right to

export a certain quantity of wine to England free of duty.

The Baron afforded his visitor every opportunity for examining the documents. In his study there was only a handful of manuscripts and early printed books, but the cream of the collection was contained in 249 cardboard boxes stowed away in two garrets. The boxes were piled up to the roof, and about 150 bundles of documents lay about on the floors. All were in good order, however, and properly catalogued. No ladder was available for reaching the upper boxes, but as the contents of those which could be examined corresponded exactly with the catalogue, there was no reason to suspect that such as were out of reach did not also correspond. According to another account, however, the collection was found at the Baron's death, some years later, to be in great confusion.

Sir Henry Ellis gathered that the bulk of the collection consisted of the archives of the Earls of Blois, great feudal lords of the Middle Ages, and genealogical and heraldic pieces chiefly relating to France. But of the correspondence between important personages of England and France of the mediæval period, which he had been led to expect, he found no trace. However, he did not have all his trouble for nothing. He lighted on a packet of about one hundred documents, apparently not catalogued, labelled, in a modern hand, "Documens relatifs à l'occupation de France par les Anglois,

1400," containing manuscripts relating to Charles, Duke of Orleans, while prisoner in England after the battle of Agincourt, and to the Duke of Bedford ; muster-rolls ; Henry V.'s acquittance to certain villages of payments on account of the war ; various grants by the same King for military service rendered ; a grant to Sir William Bourchier of the estates of the Earl of Eu ; an order concerning the grants of the Kings of England and the Dukes of Normandy to the House of Lepers at Dieppe, etc., etc.

It is supposed that these documents came from the Garde Meuble, in Paris, where the records of the English in France were preserved until the time of the Revolution, when the mob threw them out of the window. The father of the Baron de Joursanvault, an enthusiastic collector of manuscripts, was said to have rescued a large number, during those days of frenzy, by his adroitness in persuading the crowd that parchment did not make good cartridges. He augmented his collection with many specimens from municipal and monastic archives despoiled at that period. This particular packet of treasures discovered by the emissary of the British Museum in the old Château of Pomard was gladly bought by the Trustees for £160. The Joursanvault collection appears to have been more extensive and interesting than could be gathered from a brief inspection, and when it came to be sold in Paris, after the Baron's death, the British Museum made a further purchase of over 2500 documents.

§ 6. THE GRENVILLE LIBRARY

In 1846 the British Museum received by bequest the Grenville Library, which in Panizzi's opinion was its most important accession, with the single exception of the King's Library ; an accession which placed the national collection "in some respects above all other libraries, and in others left it inferior only to the Bibliothèque Royale, Paris." *The Athenæum* described it as "the noblest bequest to the nation (not excepting Sir Hans Sloane's) ever made by a private person in this country."

Thomas Grenville (1755-1846) was for many years a Trustee of the British Museum. In 1800 his political and diplomatic services to the country were rewarded by his appointment to the sinecure office of chief justice in eyre south of Trent, to which a salary of £1000 was attached. He was already a rich man, and this honorarium enabled him to indulge to the full his taste for old books. He was not attracted so much by rarity as by perfection of condition, but he gathered rarities too in the course of his fifty years' collecting. His library of 20,240 volumes, the binding of which alone cost over £56,000; includes the finest editions of the Latin classics, among them the only perfect copy known of the *editio princeps* of Ovid, printed by Azoguidus at Bologna, 1471. It also contains a splendid series of editions of Æsop. The English works include the rarest editions of the poets ; the earliest edition

of *The Canterbury Tales*, printed by Caxton, and a unique edition printed by Wynkyn de Worde ; the first edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* ; and the copy of Dr Donne's *Poems* which belonged to Charles I., and bears the pencil-marks he placed against his favourite passages. The English Bibles or parts of Bibles are another conspicuous feature of the collection. The early voyages and travels are also very important. The Spanish and Italian collections were considered better than any others outside Spain and Italy.

The books on vellum include *The Book of St Albans*, Wynkyn de Worde, 1486 ; the *Salisbury Primer*, printed by Regnault, of Paris, 1531, and the *Sforziada* of Simoneta, Milan, 1490—"a most splendid volume even in so splendid a library." The only other vellum copies known of this last are two in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Grenville and Panizzi became friends soon after Panizzi's arrival in England, finding a common ground of interest in Italian literature. When, in 1835, his fellow-Trustees of the British Museum refused to carry out the Finance Committee's recommendation to increase Panizzi's salary, Grenville was so angry that he left the room and never attended a meeting of the Trustees again.

While, during his lifetime, Grenville generously allowed any scholar, however obscure, to use his books, his original intention was that at his death they should pass to his nephew, the Duke of

Buckingham. But largely from personal regard for Panizzi, who coveted the collection for his beloved Museum, Grenville changed his mind and bequeathed the library to the nation. "A great part of my library," he said in his will, "has been purchased from the profits of a sinecure office given to me by the public, and I feel it to be a debt and a duty that I should acknowledge this obligation by giving that library so acquired to the British Museum for the use of the public." The conditions of the bequest were (1) that the collection should be kept together and not broken up, and (2) that the remainder of the catalogue should be printed.

The catalogue was entitled *Bibliotheca Grenvilliana*, and two volumes out of three had been completed by J. T. Payne and H. Foss in 1842. The third volume was subsequently added by order of the British Museum Trustees.

The books in this collection are indicated in the General Catalogue by the special press-mark G., and are not usually sent into the Reading-room. When required by readers they can be seen in the North Library.

§ 7. THE HUTH BEQUEST

Mr Alfred Henry Huth, who died in 1910, by his will made in 1903, directed that if the fine collection founded by his father, Henry Huth, and augmented by himself, should at any time be sold, the Trustees

of the British Museum should first select from it fifty volumes for the national library. He stipulated, however, that they should not choose any duplicate or more perfect copy of any book already in the national library, except by way of exchange with the Huth library, and that every copy so exchanged should count as one out of the fifty. He also made it a condition that the books thus added to the Museum collection should be called the Huth Bequest, and catalogued separately.

In the opinion of the Museum authorities, this bequest is the most important accession to the library since the Grenville books were received, and has "allowed the national collection to acquire exactly those books which to it were of the greatest importance, and which yet it could not hope to be able to acquire in competition at public auction." There are now so many wealthy collectors, and American buyers are so keenly alive to the desirability of rare and beautiful books, that the Museum purse, none too abundantly filled, has no chance against them.

The Trustees, advised by the experts of the staff, selected thirteen manuscripts of different schools—viz. one English, five French, including a Bible in two volumes, one German, one Dutch, two Flemish and two Italian, taking care to supply the deficiencies of the Museum library. Thus, as the Museum claims to possess by far the finest collection of English illuminated manuscripts in existence, the selections

from the Huth specimens are mostly foreign examples. One of these is described on pp. 80, 81.

Of the thirty-seven printed books chosen for the Museum, one was an exchange. This is a large and exceptionally fine copy of Caxton's *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres*, of which the national library already possessed two inferior copies. There are also some valuable French incunabula, and the rare Shakespeare quartos, *King Richard II.*, 1597; *King Richard III.*, 1597; and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602. In the words of the preface to the catalogue of the Huth Bequest, "the British Museum now possesses, with the exception of the very doubtfully Shakespearean *Titus Andronicus*, the First Edition of every play printed in 4^o before 1623." These at least would surely have gone to America if the Museum had not had a prior opportunity of securing them.

Another piece, of more purely bibliographical interest, is the first edition of Cervantes' *Galatea*, Alcala, 1585, of which no copy is now known in private possession. Four of the volumes are believed to be unique—viz. *The Castell of Labour* (a translation, probably by Alexander Barclay, of Pierre Gringore's *Chasteau de Labour*), printed by R. Pynson, c. 1505; *The Loves of Daphnis and Chloe*, 1587, translated by Angell Day from Bishop Amyot's French version of the Greek original, one of the earliest prose romances known; Anthony Munday's *Banquet of Daintie Conceits. Furnished with verie*

delicate and choyse inuentions, to delight their mindes, who take pleasure in Musique, and there-withall to sing sweete Ditties, either to the Lute, Bandora, Virginalles, or anie other Instrument," 1588; and a book of Elizabethan Ballads. These ballads are rare in any case, and such a large collection is exceedingly valuable and interesting.

In accordance with Mr Huth's wishes, an illustrated catalogue has been published by the Museum, giving a full description of the books acquired under his will.

X

ACCESSIONS THROUGH THE COPY- RIGHT ACTS

§ I

THE right of all to share in the heritage of knowledge given to the world by its thinkers and teachers was asserted by the Council of Paris in 1212, when it removed the ban laid upon the lending of certain books in monastic libraries. The same spirit lies at the root of the Copyright laws. "Copyright" not only protects the author's rights against the public, but it maintains the public's rights—granting that they *are* rights—against the author or his heirs or assigns. Literary property is the only property that must in time and by law pass to the community. The creator—that is, the author—has only a limited tenure. A man's land or house or furniture are entirely his while he lives, and at his death may pass to his heirs or—bar entail—to whomsoever he pleases—but an Act of Parliament decrees that the book which is the fruit of his brain must be handed over for the benefit of the community—first, immediately on publication, in the form of a

free copy delivered to the library of the British Museum, and other free copies, given on demand, to certain other public libraries; and secondly, when, after a specified number of years shall have elapsed, the rights of reproduction are thrown open to all who care to exercise them. Copyright, therefore, so far as authors are concerned, is a merely temporary and taxed monopoly, and as concerns the community, it is a deferred benefit derived from the confiscated aftermath of voluntary individual labour.

The same spirit, too, actuated most of the great book-collectors. They, also, recognised a distinction between literary property, in the shape of a collection of books, and all other property, and opened their libraries to the needy with more alacrity than they would have opened their parks or their purses. Whether, as authors, they would have shown equal liberality, to their own financial detriment, it is not possible to say. But it seems that the greater the collector and the more extensive his collection, the more desirous he was that his treasures should be useful to others as well as himself, and that after his death they should not be dispersed. These twin motives—a generous acknowledgment of the intellectual rights of others and a real affection for the books themselves, together, no doubt, with an innocent and benevolent pride—gave us the nucleus of the national library, and prompted some of its noblest benefactions.

But for long the attitude of the State was quite opposite to that of individuals. Directly printing revealed itself both as a bread-winning craft and as a force of almost limitless potency for good or for evil, restrictions were set upon its practice. The printers desired protection for their craft against foreign competitors, while Church and State united in fearing it as an instrument of heresy and sedition. The attitude of the printers on the one hand, and that of Church and State on the other, were of reciprocal benefit, and by guarding the craft, Church and State also guarded themselves. Although a statute of Richard III. allowed the importing and free sale of books either written or printed, Henry VIII. forbade not only the possession or circulation of books "perverting the Scriptures," but also, for trade reasons, the importing of books printed abroad. In 1557 the State virtually allied itself with the craft for mutual protection by granting to the Company of Stationers of London a charter giving them the monopoly—save for certain rights of the two universities—of printing in England and her dominions, with power to seek out illegal presses, and to punish the printers. Elizabeth confirmed this charter in 1559, and in the same year she issued an injunction against every book printed without licence from the Crown, the Privy Council, the Archbishops, or the Bishop of London. These measures, however, were not enough, and in

1584, if not before,¹ the Star Chamber drew up regulations "for suppressing abuses in printing." Nevertheless, books continued to be illegally imported, printed and sold, as shown by the proclamations and Star Chamber decrees made against these practices from time to time.

Thus almost the first attitude of the State towards books and printing was one of suspicion and repression, and this lasted till, in 1696, Parliament refused to sanction a censorship of the press.²

At the present day, so far has the pendulum swung; the State no longer suppresses books, but insists; through the Copyright laws; that copies of all books published in this country shall be made gratuitously accessible to the public, and there is no monopoly, apart from the limited monopoly sanctioned by these same laws, nor any censorship or restriction except in the case of such books as are deemed to be openly blasphemous, seditious, libellous or indecent.

§ 2

When Sir Thomas Bodley founded the library at

¹ "A Decree of Starre Chamber concerning Printing" was printed, by order, in 1637. This has been stated to be the first decree of the kind. But it was only the first *printed*. It refers to "divers decrees and ordinances . . . for the better government of Printers and Printing" made in the "three and twentieth yere of Queen Elizabeth, *and before*." (The italics are mine.) See the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic Series), for decrees made in 1584 and 1586.

² I have been unable to discover precisely when the Company of Stationers' monopoly ceased. Application to the Company elicited no information to the point at all.

Oxford which bears his name, among other benefactions that he secured for it was a promise, made in 1610, by the Company of Stationers, of a copy of every book printed by a member of the Company and not before printed.

This happy idea of making the Stationers' very monopoly assist the spread of learning, originated with Thomas James, Bodley's librarian, and was the source of the spring whence our great libraries to-day derive their constant supply of contemporary English books. For had there been no monopoly of printing at this time, Bodley would not have been able to make such a complete and efficient arrangement for keeping his library up to date, and it may well be that without the example set by the Stationers' Company at Bodley's instigation, our public libraries would not at this moment be enjoying their privilege of free copies.

Under Charles II. the public rights in books and the lack of a national library were partially and obliquely acknowledged by Act of Parliament. It was enacted in 1662 that a copy of every work printed in this country was to be delivered for the Royal Library and for each of the two Universities, and it is hardly to be doubted that the Stationers' concession to the Bodleian was the cause of the enactment.

Under Queen Anne the first Copyright Act (1709) was passed for the encouragement of learning by vesting books in their authors or their assigns for a

period of fourteen years in the case of books not already printed, and of twenty-one years in the case of books already printed. Sion College, London, the four Scottish Universities, and the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, were now added to the list of the privileged. An Act of 1775 made the delivery of library copies a condition of copyright. An Act of 1801, passed after the union with Ireland, added to the former list Trinity College, Dublin, and the Society of King's Inn, Dublin. Hitherto English works had been pirated in Ireland and vice versa.

When the Royal Library was given to the nation in 1757, the royal right to a copy of every new book was transferred with it. In 1814 an Act of Parliament placed the British Museum at the head of the privileged institutions, and henceforth the royal privilege was merged, in practice at any rate, in the Museum privilege. Subsequent Copyright Acts have continued this right. On the other hand, in 1836, Sion College, the four Scottish Universities, and King's Inn, Dublin, were weeded out from the literary free list, but they were voted an annual grant of money by way of compensation.

The rights of the remaining libraries were further confirmed by the Copyright Act of 1842. But for many years past the law as to free copies for public libraries had been practically a dead letter, and as, in spite of the new Act, it was still shamefully evaded, the Museum authorities employed a collector to

gather in the books due to them. The collector brought back more books than had been registered at Stationers' Hall.¹ The publishers continuing contumacious, Panizzi obtained a power of attorney from the Trustees and gave notice of his intention of enforcing the Museum's rights. In some cases he had to go to law, but these afforded salutary examples, and the result of his firmness was a large increase in the accessions to the national library. The Copyright Act is now the one great means by which the library keeps up its supply of contemporary books published in the United Kingdom.

The Royal Commission on Copyright, which sat in 1878, considered that the laws for giving gratuitous copies of books to libraries other than the British Museum should be repealed, as the libraries so benefited all belonged to wealthy bodies able to buy what they wanted.

The latest Copyright Act, that of 1911, adds to the five above-named institutions one other, subject to the provisions of section 15—the National Library of Wales. The public libraries at present entitled by law to a free copy of every book published in the United Kingdom are, therefore: the Library of the British Museum; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the University Library, Cambridge; the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh; the Library

¹ At this time registration at Stationers' Hall was a necessary condition of the right to take action at law in respect of infringement of copyright.

of Trinity College, Dublin ; and the National Library of Wales. It should be observed that to the British Museum alone are books to be delivered without being asked for, and they must be the best copies there are. To the other five libraries they need be delivered only on written demand being made within a year of publication, and they are to be copies on paper such as that on which the largest number of copies is printed for sale.

XI

THE CATALOGUE

To understand the history of the General Catalogue of the Printed Books in the British Museum, it is necessary to realise first some of the difficulties of cataloguing or classifying books. It is said that Cardinal Borromeo was so impressed with the difficulties of making a good catalogue that he forbade the cataloguing of his library at Milan on pain of excommunication.

At first sight, to those who have never attempted it, the arrangement of a library appears a very simple matter. Almost everyone who has tried to arrange his own little collection of books has started by dividing them into classes according to their subjects—for instance, into Religion, History, Geography, Philosophy, Science, Art, Fiction, Poetry—nothing seems easier than to order them in some such way, and it may be easy, perhaps, when dealing with a few dozen volumes. But directly the novice comes to handle books by the hundred, even if only one or two hundred, he discovers, to his perplexity, that one particular book may quite fitly be classed under several different heads ; he will find that the broad classification just suggested is far too broad, and

that Religion must be divided into Christian and non-Christian, for example ; history into Roman, English, French, and so on and so on, and the further he goes and the more books he has to deal with, the more subdivisions he has to make when he comes to compile even the most meagre catalogue. And even so he will be troubled by overlappings. Should Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*, for instance, go under Geography, or Science, or Travel ? If he decides that it belongs to all three categories, and if he does not mind the labour of making cross-references, and two or three entries instead of only one, and if he continues his work on this plan, he will soon be dismayed at the bulk to which his catalogue is swelling. He may also run the risk of error through a too hasty inspection of books with which he is unacquainted, though we may take it that the bookseller who classed *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a work of travel affords an extreme example of superficiality.

It is a curious thing that the difficulties of classification by subject are seldom anticipated even by the most far-sighted. They have to be brought home by personal experience, or by very copious examples. Even cultivated minds often fail to realise the almost infinite nature of the ideal classification, and when this question was discussed, with reference to the British Museum Catalogue, before a House of Commons Committee in 1836, a learned Fellow of the Royal Society made himself eminently

ridiculous, in the eyes of those who knew, by the airy way in which he laid down the law on cataloguing by subject. He stated that he himself could classify one thousand works in a day.

“Where it was literature I put an L. ; where it was Geology, a G. ; where it was Zoology, a Z. ; if it was a particular zoological treatise—for example, *Mammalia*, I put MA.—I put a designation which I should understand myself immediately.” He admitted, however, that he had not had much experience in the compiling of catalogues of very extensive libraries, but nevertheless he declared his ability to classify forty titles in five minutes.

Directly one begins to think about it, it is obvious that the classification of a comprehensive library is practically equivalent to a classification of everything that has ever come within man’s mental grasp, for there is nothing that has ever been the subject of human thought, the result of human activity, or the object of human observation, effort, wonder or speculation, that has not been written of in books. This being so, the mind that can take a bird’s-eye view of the whole may well feel at a loss, when starting a classification of subjects, how to solve even the initial question of where to begin. The overlapping, the double and manifold overlapping, though undoubtedly satisfactory as proof of the relation and interrelation and ultimate unity of all things, forbids the definite division of knowledge into hard and fast compartments. Nevertheless,

or perhaps we should say therefore, the classification by subjects is the ideal classification, and many have been the attempts to discover a system on which class-catalogues of books might be drawn up. A detailed class catalogue, however, was for long considered impracticable, but for shelf arrangement, since one book can occupy only one place, a rough and ready division by subject does not prove very difficult. As regards the shelf arrangement, therefore, the books of the national library are grouped, broadly, according to subject.

Some systems of subject classifications begin with God, and work downwards, others with Man or with lowlier forms of life, and work upwards. The library at Melbourne begins with Sponges, as the simplest multicellular beings; the British Museum library begins with Theology. The books of this class are headed by the Bible, and that very fact illustrates some of the difficulties of the case. For the Bible is a library in itself. But, as Dr Garnett has pointed out, it "not only holds in civilised countries a place unique among books, but has further established its claim to precedence by the practical test of being the first to get itself printed."

The arrangement of Bibles may be taken as an example of the subdivisions to which every class of book must be subjected. "It is obvious," says the same authority, "that Bibles should precede parts of Bibles; that originals should precede translations; the more ancient originals the more

recent ; and Bibles in both original tongues those in one original. Thus we obtain the following arrangement at starting :—*Polyglots, Hebrew, Greek.*

“ It is equally plain that Greek cannot fitly be succeeded save by Latin ; that Latin is most naturally succeeded by its modern derivatives ; that these draw after them the other European languages in due order ; the Slavonic forming a link with the Oriental, which in their turn usher in the African, American, and Polynesian.”

The shelf classification of the British Museum library is, summarily, as follows :—

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| Theology. | Geography. |
| Law. | Topography. |
| Science. | History. |
| Art. | Biography. |
| Bibliography. | Genealogy. |
| Literature. | Periodicals. |
| Philology. | |

For the purpose of a catalogue, however, such grouping is not feasible. It has been tried and found wanting. Nor is a classification by titles possible in a library of any size, and in any case it would presuppose a knowledge of the book itself. The searcher does not always know the title of the book he seeks and the title does not always describe the contents of the book. Who would guess from its title that *Tom Tit Tot* is a study of a branch of folk-lore ? Or who can condemn as entirely absurd

the library assistant who, unable to supply Zola's *La Terre*, thought Geikie's *The Earth* would do as well? Maria Edgeworth's *Essay on Irish Bulls* was ordered for the use of the Board of Agriculture, and W. W. Jacobs' *Sea-urchins* has been noted by a young naturalist as a treatise on Echinoderms. Then some titles are complex—for instance, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. A person wishing for a book of ancient English poetry would not look for it under *Reliques* unless he already knew of the existence of this particular work. He might, conceivably, seek it under *Ancient*, but he might just as well look under *Old*, where, of course, he would never find it. But whether he looked under *Ancient* or *English* or *Poetry*, he would have to read hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of titles before he lighted on this one, for all these three words are common to the titles of numberless books.

An author catalogue, however, is a necessity, whether as an inventory or as a guide, and a comparatively simple matter. Thus the Museum library was to begin with, and still is, arranged mainly, though not exclusively, under the names of authors. Had the class catalogue planned in 1825—presumably to the exclusion of an author catalogue—been proceeded with, it would sooner or later have become obsolete and have demanded substantial readjustment. The ingenious and minute class-systems devised within more recent years were then undreamed of, and it is still far from clear that they

could be satisfactorily applied to the Museum collection.

When the difficulty of devising a satisfactory system of listing the books has been in some way settled, there comes the further difficulty of providing for additions to the list or catalogue which occur either while it is being made or after it has been brought up to date. In a vast collection like that of the British Museum this difficulty is enormous, and it was for long an obstacle to the completion of the catalogue. Not until it occurred to someone to use the simple device which to-day is a commonplace in every business office—the system, as we may call it, of the movable unit—was it in any way possible to reduce the enormous and daily increasing mass of books in the Museum to order.

This is but a slight outline of some of the difficulties of arranging and cataloguing any considerable number of books. To those who have even the least acquaintance with such work it will be superfluous, and to those who have not it will give but a meagre idea of the nature of the task.

In 1787 the British Museum issued the first catalogue of its printed books: *Librorum Impressorum qui in Museo Britannico adservantur Catalogus*, 2 vols. fol. 1787. The half-title reads *Catalogus Bibliothecæ Musei Britannici*. This catalogue gives the name of the author, the name of the book, place, date, size, but no press-marks—i.e. no guides as to the position of the books in the library presses. The

corrigenda are in Latin. There is no word of preface, and the compilers are not named. It was drawn up by P. M. Maty, S. Harper, and S. Ayscough, all Museum officials.

In March, 1807, the work was begun of revising this catalogue and adding the accessions to the library since 1787. It took two years to insert all the new titles. Then the old part was given a much needed revision, which was completed in November, 1810. The revised and enlarged edition was sent to press immediately, and finished in May, 1819. In the course of these nine years the libraries of Dr Burney and Baron von Moll were bought by the Museum, and such titles from these collections as came under letters not already printed off were duly added. Those that were too late for insertion had to bide their time. The new edition of the catalogue, dated 1813-1819, was in 7 vols. octavo. Sir Henry Ellis, Keeper of the Printed Books, did the letters A to F, with P, Q and R, and the Rev. H. H. Baber did the rest. It was an author catalogue, mainly, but contained some class headings, such as "Anglia" (including books concerning "England") "Ballads," "Bibliotheca," etc., which are open to the same objections as any other attempts at classification.

The advantages of the longed-for classed or subject catalogue, however, over an author catalogue, deployed themselves in full view, while the difficulties lay in ambush. So a classed catalogue was planned

and money was voted for its making. Now came forward the Rev. T. H. Horne, not yet in the Museum service, with his *Outlines for the Classification of a Library, respectfully submitted to the consideration of the Trustees of the British Museum*, of which some official copies were printed in 1825 for the use of the Trustees. This work recapitulated the heads of twenty bibliographical systems, beginning with one formed on Bacon's divisions of human learning. Bacon and Dr Conyers Middleton are the only Englishmen quoted. Horne's own classification was as follows:—

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| Class | I. Religion. |
| „ | II. Jurisprudence. |
| „ | III. Philosophy. |
| „ | IV. Arts and Trades. |
| „ | V. History. |
| „ | VI. Literature. |

and each class is divided into a large number of subdivisions. It is a good system as far as it goes, but it fails to meet the needs of a great library, just as its predecessors fail. However, it was adopted by the Trustees, and a classed catalogue according to Horne's system was in preparation by Horne, assisted by Frederic Madden, and others, for some seven years, at a cost of £7000, and then abandoned about half-way through, when, in 1834, the Trustees ordered the compilation of the new alphabetical catalogue.

By this year (1834), in an endeavour to keep pace

with the growth of the library, two copies of Ellis and Baber's edition of the catalogue, one for library and one for Reading-room use, had been inlaid, page by page, on large paper, interleaved, and bound up again, making 23 volumes folio instead of 7 volumes octavo. On the interleaved pages had been written the titles of the most important accessions since the catalogue was printed. These interleaved copies were now showing signs of wear and tear, and the written pages were becoming overcrowded. The Trustees, therefore, ordered Baber to submit a plan for a complete alphabetical catalogue. In response Baber advised an author catalogue, the compilation of which should be superintended by Panizzi. The Trustees, however, made Baber responsible for the plan of the work and for its execution. Horne was also desired to suspend his labours on the classed catalogue and to assist with the alphabetical one.

In 1835-1836 a Committee of the House of Commons held an inquiry into the affairs of the British Museum, and Baber, in July, 1835, reported to the Trustees that he was obliged to interrupt his work on the catalogue in order to make the laborious researches necessary to forward the committee's investigations. Early in 1836 the work was further delayed while a transcript of the interleaved catalogue was made for use in the Reading-room.

The question of the catalogue was among the matters considered by the committee. Witnesses testified that all the catalogues of manuscripts,

especially of the Cottonian, Harleian, King's and Additional Manuscripts, were very defective ; that the Arundel Catalogue was very good, and the Lansdowne Catalogue very fair.

As regarded the general catalogue of printed books, the majority were strongly in favour of a classed catalogue as against an author catalogue, and John Murray was so convinced of the desirability of such a work that he stated his willingness to publish it at his own expense if the Museum would supply the copy, and he was of opinion that the venture would be a financial success.

But Baber, Keeper of the Printed Books, considered that the alphabet or author catalogue was likely to be the most useful, if only one of the two was possible, but that both were desirable. Panizzi went further, and held an author catalogue to be of "essential importance," and that it was impossible to make a good classed catalogue. He had never heard of any, he said, nor of any two persons agreeing on the plan of such a work. "The greatest men of all centuries have all talked about classed catalogues as a matter of theory." He thought Horne's plan one of the best he had seen.

Edward Edwards testified to the errors of the existing catalogue. He pointed out such inconsistencies as *D'Israeli* in one place and *Israeli, D'*, in another ; *Reports of Chancery Cases*, by Jackson, sometimes under *Chancery* and sometimes under *Jackson* ; *Reports of the British and Foreign School*

Society under Society, and Reports of the National School Society under Education. Again, *Specimens of a Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the Eastern Languages, by the Brethren of the Serampore Mission,* appeared under *Specimens*.

At the time of this inquiry the catalogues of the printed books in the library were as follows:—

Catalogue of Books of the Royal Library of the Kings of England, fol. (MS., no date).

Bibliothecæ Regiæ Catalogus, 5 vols. fol., 1820-1829.

Barnard's catalogue of the library presented by George IV.

Librorum Impressorum qui in Museo Britannico adservantur Catalogus. Ellis and Baber's revised and enlarged edition, 1813-1819, with interleaved manuscript additions.

Catalogue of the Thomason Tracts (MS.).

Catalogue of Sir Joseph Banks' Library.

A partly completed catalogue of Pamphlets on the French Revolution.

Some additional lists.

These, as regards the printed books, were to be incorporated into one general catalogue. Manuscripts, as always, were to be dealt with apart.

In 1838 the Trustees decided not only to make, but to print a catalogue, on the lines of Ellis and Baber's, which should include every book in the library up to the close of 1839. Panizzi, now Keeper of the Printed Books, was strongly against printing,

but the Trustees overruled his objections, affirmed their "fixed determination" to proceed to print, and instructed him to draw up a plan. Panizzi obeyed, but against his better judgment. In 1839, with the assistance of Winter Jones, Thomas Watts, J. H. Parry and Edward Edwards, he drew up the famous Ninety-one Rules on which the new catalogue was to be framed. They are a very remarkable example of the result of far-sightedness, experience and a wide understanding of the work they were to govern. Their number alone shows the contingencies that were anticipated and provided against, and their apparent complexity only simplifies the task of those who use them. Yet, notwithstanding, when they came to be applied in practice, they were found insufficient and some supplementary clauses were added. They were printed on the fly-leaf of the 1841 catalogue, with the supplementary portions in italics. They were printed separately in 1900 and reprinted in 1912, and they form the basis of every catalogue scientifically compiled since they were drawn up.

When completed, the Ninety-one Rules were submitted to the Trustees, who sanctioned them after making some slight amendments.

It was understood that the Trustees desired that the new catalogue should be delivered to them complete from the press by the end of 1844, and that the volumes should be printed as they were made. But there appears to have been some misunderstanding,

or, in plain English, a muddle, though it is not clear how this came about. It would seem, however, that the minutes of the Trustees' proceedings were not accurately taken down or reproduced, and that a confusion was made between having the catalogue ready *in* the press, or printed, by December, 1844, and ready *for* the press. In the effort to comply with what appeared to be the wishes of the Trustees, the work was hurried on, and Volume I., purporting to contain all entries under A, appeared in July, 1841. It consisted of 457 pages, printed in double columns, and gave no press-marks.

This was not only the first but the last volume of the new catalogue. As regards its system and arrangement, despite some inconsistencies, it was far in advance of any other compilation of its kind, but as a guide to the A items of the national library it was hopelessly incomplete. For as other letters were proceeded with, cross-references to A constantly occurred, too late, of course, for inclusion, and entries rightly belonging to A in the first place were discovered under other letters, also too late for insertion in their proper order.

But apart from its inevitable incompleteness, which was not Panizzi's fault, the catalogue of 1841 met with disapproval on other grounds, for which some held Panizzi to blame. Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, who had conceived a great hatred of Panizzi and all his works, published a pamphlet entitled

Animadversions on the Library and Catalogues of the British Museum, wherein he complained, in violent terms, of the mismanagement of the library, and, among other things, of the "preposterous plan" of Panizzi's "*magnum opus*, the new catalogue." He emphasised the need of a fresh and complete catalogue, and "neither the exotic capriccios of a Librarian, nor the pedantic whims of a Trustee, should be allowed to delay its progress." He stated that the public wanted, in the first instance at least, "simply a *practical* catalogue, having the titles or authors' names in alphabetical order, and not a catalogue framed upon so abstruse a plan as to require ninety-one rules for its construction." Harris proceeded to criticise the catalogue in detail, and complained of the general heads, "Academies," "Periodical Publications," and so on, to which readers were referred on occasion. For instance, anyone wanting *The Annual Register* is told to see "Periodical Publications." Harris declared "he might almost as well be referred to the Millennium, for who can tell when either will appear?"

Another critic, J. E. Gray, an assistant in the Natural History Department, pointed out that while professing to be an alphabetical (author) catalogue, it was really a combination of alphabetical, biographical, geographical and class catalogues; he also complained of the length of the titles. He maintained that a subject catalogue was not impossible.

Again, John Payne Collier, librarian to the Duke of Devonshire, showed that a printed catalogue that readers could consult at home would be highly convenient, and that the 1841 volume was made on an entirely wrong principle because of the length of so many of the entries. He considered that an Index was what was wanted rather than a catalogue, though the full catalogue designed by Panizzi might be useful as an inventory of the contents of the library. "Useability" was wanted rather than perfection. He would put additions into a supplement.

Payne Collier offered twenty-five specimen titles as examples of how a useful catalogue could be speedily made. These were found, on examination, to contain thirteen different kinds of error, and an average of two in each entry. Mr Winter Jones said they contained "every error that could possibly be committed."

Not one of these critics grasped the difficulties of the task, and not one of them appreciated Panizzi's desire to produce a thorough and conclusive piece of work. They would have had a little hand-list which readers could carry home for private perusal, and only Panizzi appears to have realised clearly what the catalogue of a great library could be and should be, and indeed must be. Obviously, while the catalogue was still imperfect, everyone desiring to consult it must have suffered grave inconvenience, but we of to-day, reaping the fruits of Panizzi's

labour and foresight, know that he was carrying out his gigantic task not for his contemporaries alone but for posterity to all time.

Thus as regards a printed catalogue no apparent progress was made after Ellis and Baber produced their last volume in 1819. But nevertheless the foundations of a monumental work were being laid. The Ninety-one Rules had been drawn up, and Ellis and Baber's catalogue was growing daily through manuscript additions, until by 1846 its original seven volumes octavo had swelled to forty-eight volumes folio. Of this there was but one copy. Panizzi remained steadfast in his objection to printing, but even his foresight failed to anticipate the dimensions to which the interleaved catalogue would grow.

Another commission sat in 1848 to inquire into the Constitution and Management of the British Museum, and published their report in 1850. They gave it as their opinion that the Trustees were ill advised in their attempt to print the catalogue, and concurred in the decision to suspend printing. They also stated that their inquiries led them to fear that there was some hazard in the interference of the Trustees in the details of the library. "With respect to the system and form of the catalogue, whatever be its defects, Mr Panizzi can be charged with nothing further than the constant approval and acceptance of one leading principle—that of fulness and accuracy."

Among those who gave evidence before the commission was Thomas Carlyle. Concerning the catalogue, he declared that there should be "a catalogue you can carry with you."¹ "The want of a printed catalogue of the British Museum is an immense evil," he said. He also suggested the compilation of specific subject catalogues—for instance, on the French Revolution, the Reformation, English History during the Civil War—which readers could buy and take home to study at leisure. This suggestion has since been in a measure acted upon, and excerpts from the catalogue, on certain subjects, can be bought at a price fixed according to size.

Meanwhile, round the nucleus of Ellis and Baber was accumulating a vast host of new entries. The problem of how to incorporate the printed and the manuscript entries into one was solved by the device arrived at independently in 1849 by Wilson Croker and by E. A. Roy of the Museum—that each entry should be written on a movable slip and not on the leaf itself. The slips could be lightly pasted on the leaf and shifted as new ones came in, and so allow the alphabetical order to be preserved. Thus the "slip" idea, not a new one by any means, evolved into the "movable unit" idea, the idea of the card indexes and loose-leaf files now so common, the idea which made practicable the completion

¹ He did not say "take home with you," as is sometimes stated.

of the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books.¹

Accordingly, all the accumulated new titles were transcribed on separate slips, and with them the titles of the books daily received, also on separate slips, and pasted on to the blank leaves of large folio volumes, with spaces left for the insertion of fresh slips, and guards for the insertion of fresh interleaves. The new catalogue filled 150 volumes, and was placed in the Reading-room for public use in 1850.

Four copies of each slip were made by the "carbonic" process. Three were for staff and Reading-room purposes; the fourth was carefully laid aside. Although Panizzi knew a perfect subject catalogue to be an impossible thing, he was quite alive to the value of even an imperfect work of the kind, and without interfering with the progress of the more practicable author catalogue, he quietly laid the foundation for a catalogue of subjects. He put the fourth copies away in boxes, arranging them according to the position of the books on the shelves. This, as we have seen, was equivalent to a classification by subjects, according to the system adopted by the British Museum. The "fourth slips" to-day form a shelf-list which is in official use.

¹ Mr W. R. B. Prideaux (*Liby. Assoc. Record*, 1909, pp. 161-162) has shown that the movable unit was anticipated by Conrad Gesner at least as early as 1548. See also J. D. Brown, *Library Classification and Cataloguing*, p. 182.

The slip method of bringing and keeping the catalogue up to date had its drawbacks. Handwriting, however good, is less legible and requires more space than print ; there were no copies available for extra-Museum use ; and above all there was the enormous increase in size. By 1880 this slip catalogue had grown to nearly 3000 volumes, some of which were almost too heavy to lift. The Treasury also, which controls the expenditure of the Museum, complained of the great cost of continually breaking up and rebinding these enormous books.

Sir Edward Bond, appointed Principal Librarian in 1878, was strongly in favour of reducing this accumulation to print. He acted very rapidly. He obtained the sanction of the Treasury, drew up a scheme with his colleagues, and in 1879 new accessions were no longer recorded in writing, but in print. In 1881 the printing of the whole catalogue was begun, under the editorship of Dr Richard Garnett. When Dr Garnett was appointed Keeper of the Printed Books, in 1890, he was succeeded in the editorship by Mr A. W. K. Miller.

The Treasury agreed to allot for so long as they saw fit an annual sum for the gradual conversion of the manuscript catalogue into a printed one, on condition that the money was applied to remedying defects and reducing the most unwieldy volumes. Therefore some of the later letters were printed before the earlier. It has been stated that had a lump sum of £100,000 been granted the whole work might have

been put in hand at once and completed much earlier, instead of being carried out slowly and piecemeal.

For some years, while the bulk of the catalogue was being printed, two sets of titles were in the press together—namely, titles of books already entered in the General Catalogue, and titles of books received while printing was in progress.

Three or four volumes of the manuscript catalogue having been chosen for reduction into print, they were revised, inconsistencies and errors were removed as completely as possible, and duplicate entries were eliminated and replaced by the words “Another copy” or “Another edition.” When printed, these several bulky volumes dwindled to one. Copies for subscribers and extra-Museum use were printed in double columns, but copies for Reading-room and staff use were printed in one column to a page on stout paper and bound up with guards, each page having a blank space for a column of accessions,¹ and the guards allowing for interleaving. The main object kept in view was the imperative need of providing for an indefinite—one might almost say an infinite—number of future accessions.

Lists of accessions are printed from time to time. While some copies are temporarily placed in the Reading-room for the information of readers, others are cut up into single entries, and inserted in the blank columns waiting to receive them. When

¹ Later, the space of a page and a half, or three columns, was allowed for accessions.

necessary, they are removed from their temporary column and incorporated into the permanent or standing column, a reprint takes place, the volumes are enlarged or divided, without any disarrangement of the material, and so the process continues indefinitely, and will probably continue in much the same way until some undreamed-of revolution in matters bibliographical comes to pass, or the British Museum comes to an end.

This interleaved catalogue is in triplicate—a Blue, a Red and a Green copy, according to their bindings.

Perhaps the loose-leaf system may come to be used for the British Museum Catalogue—a system recently adopted in America for catalogues and encyclopædias which require bringing up to date from time to time, but so far known in England only by its application to notebooks, ledgers, etc., handled by a comparatively small number of people. In these books the leaves are not double, quired and sewn. They are single, and held together by metal rings passing through perforations on their inner margins,¹ or sometimes a metal fitting adjusted by screws helps to secure the leaves to the cover. The advantage lies in the ease with which superseded pages can be removed and replaced by fresh ones. But a book of this fashion is clumsy and easily torn.

¹ A *reliure mobile*, invented by Fauqueux, a stationer of Paris, is described by J. P. Namur, in his *Manuel de Bibliothécaire*, 1834, Pt. I., p. 95.

To copies for extra-Museum use the movable unit system cannot be applied. Small libraries would have neither the staff to deal with the progressive catalogue nor space to house it. Subscribers' and presentation copies are therefore printed and bound like ordinary books, and the accessions are contained in supplementary volumes.

The catalogue of books in the library previous to the year 1881 was finished in 1900, and that of books added to the library in 1882-1889 not incorporated in this list was finished in 1905.

During 1914—more recent figures are not available at the time of writing—the General Catalogue and the Catalogues of Maps and Music were augmented by 42,063 titles; 99 volumes of the General Catalogue were broken up and rebound in 164 volumes.

The General Catalogue now fills over 1000 volumes, containing, roughly, upwards of 4,700,000 entries. It is in the main an author catalogue, but anonymous works, or those written under pseudonyms of more than one word, are classified under the most salient word in the title, and the author's name, where known, is added in square brackets. For example, the first edition of Miss Braddon's novel, *The Day Will Come*, appears as follows:—"Day. The Day will come. A novel. By the author of 'Lady Audley's Secret,' etc. [Mary Elizabeth Braddon]," and so on. There are also important class-headings—e.g.,

Academies, comprising the publications of learned bodies, arranged according to towns and rendered

easy to consult by the provision of an index. This heading was invented by Panizzi, and has been the subject of a good deal of adverse criticism. It harbours some inconsistencies, but it would be difficult to suggest a heading for the purpose which did not.

Bible. A large and complete class-section comprising Bibles and parts of Bibles in all languages.

Directories. Arranged according to professions, trades or places.

Encyclopædias. Comprising all anonymous works of this kind.

Ephemerides. Almanacks and kindred publications.

Liturgies. A large and complete class-section, comprising liturgical works of all branches of the Christian Church and sects ; with an Index.

Periodical Publications. English and foreign periodical publications of all kinds (exclusive of newspapers) arranged under places ; with an Index.

There are other special heads under which are grouped items not directly referable to any particular author, such as **England**, comprising only official or anonymous works and therefore—unlike **Bible** or **Liturgies**, for example—not a complete class-section. All of these are provided with Indexes.

The Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts have always been catalogued by themselves and not with the general library, although they were not made into a separate department until 1892. The

Catalogue of the Chinese Books and Manuscripts (1877), compiled by the late Sir R. K. Douglas, then Senior Assistant in the Department of Printed Books, is believed to be "the first Catalogue ever published in Europe of an extensive Chinese library."

The Music and the Maps are also catalogued separately.

The official description of the General Catalogue, as given in its own pages, is as follows:—

ACADEMIES, LONDON. BRITISH MUSEUM

General Catalogue of Printed Books: edited 1881-1889 by R. Garnett; 1890-1900, by A. W. K. Miller. 393 pt. 1881-1900. fol. L.R.

— *Supplement*. [Containing titles of all books added to the Library 1882-1889 which were not incorporated in the General Catalogue during the process of printing. Ed. A. W. K. Miller.] 44 pt. 1900-1905. fol. L.R.

— [Another copy. Interleaved and containing the titles of all books added to the Library since the General Catalogue was printed.] n.d. Reading-room Circles.

The press-mark L.R., which no doubt is awaiting its turn for revision, signifies that the first-named copy, and its Supplement, are kept in the library formerly known as the Large Room. The latter and interleaved copy is, of course, the great 1000-volume

catalogue in the Reading-room, which is continually being augmented and kept up to date. The catalogue is thus always complete, but will never be finished. And while it must inevitably share the imperfection attaching to all human handiwork, we can proudly say that it is the largest and most perfect catalogue in the world.

XII

THE SUBJECT INDEX

THE reader will have gathered that a subject catalogue is an ideal much to be desired, but in practice a matter of considerable difficulty, unless confined within more or less narrow limits, and that it has not yet seemed applicable to the whole contents of the Museum library.

When Dr G. K. Fortescue became Superintendent of the Reading-room, in 1884, the lack of any kind of subject catalogue was constantly brought home to him by the inquiries made by readers. The first question he was asked was: "What is the best guide to Madeira?" He was able to answer that Brown's Guide was the standard work on Madeira, but he could not give Brown's initials, nor did he know whether it was Browne with an *e* or Brown without an *e*. The entries in the catalogue under *Brown* filled two volumes. On the same day he was asked for books on Bulgaria, on Cremation, on Diseases of Sheep, and on Land-tenure in Scotland. And the inquirers generally demanded the newest books on their respective subjects.

Dr Fortescue accordingly made a plan for helping such readers, and for supplying them with a subject

index. He rendered his task possible by setting to it certain hard and fast limits. In the first place, he dealt only with works published between January, 1880, and August, 1885. In the second, he omitted novels, poems, plays and miscellaneous essays.

The Index was not at first intended for publication, but its value was so obvious that it was printed by order of the Trustees in 1886. In 1891 a second volume, treating books of the years 1885-1890, was published; in 1897, a third volume, treating books of the years 1891-1895. In 1902-1903 the Index was issued in a new edition, brought up to the year 1900, under the title of *Subject Index of the Modern Works added to the Library of the British Museum in the years 1881-1900.* 3 vols. 8°. 1902-1903. This edition contains about 155,000 entries in one subject alphabet, with press-marks. Supplements embodying the additions for 1901-1905, and for 1906-1910, were published in 1906 and 1911 respectively. By means of numerous cross-references the index is very easy to consult. It is not perfect—no such book could be—but its utility is unbounded. It is a really great work, although in bulk it seems trivial beside the General Catalogue, and it forms the completest guide available anywhere for modern European literature outside the classes purposely excluded.

Dr Fortescue died in October, 1912, within a few days of his impending retirement from the Keepership of the Printed Books. The carrying on of his plan, which was to publish a further Supplement in

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1916, and in 1921 to incorporate the three Supplements into one Index for 1901-1920, remains for other hands.

In the spring of 1913 a continuation of the Subject Index from 1911 was placed in the Reading-room. It is comprised in 8 vols., interleaved, and lettered: "Subject Index, 1911- . Temporary Rough List." It is on the same plan as the General Catalogue—that is, accessions are allowed for, and the list can always be kept up to date. The entries consist of slips as printed for the General Catalogue, arranged under handwritten subject headings, and thus the Index is the beginning of the realisation of the scheme outlined first by Panizzi, and, later, by Dr Garnett.

XIII

SOME TREASURES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

AN attempt to make a satisfactory selection of some of the treasures of the national library and to write it down in anything less dry than mere catalogue form is almost a hopeless if not a ridiculous undertaking. But in the belief that the reader who, perhaps, has no opportunity of visiting the British Museum in person and of inspecting the exhibition of manuscripts and books shown in the Grenville and the King's Libraries, or of making use of the Reading-rooms, might wish for a glance, even though a brief one, at some of its riches, I append this chapter, though perfectly aware of its utter inadequacy.

From whatever side the library is approached, and whatever demands are made upon it, it will be found marvellously rich and representative. Not only may it be said that there are few subjects, or periods, or even names, upon which it does not offer practically all information which has ever found its way into print, but in innumerable cases it offers more—it offers the sources and raw material of further knowledge.

A survey of the treasures begins with the manuscripts, and the manuscripts include, naturally, many examples which are not books. It is puzzling, perhaps, where manuscripts are concerned, to decide exactly what a library should or should not contain; for instance, it is difficult to find an entirely satisfactory reason for the exclusion of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, while such things as seals, brass-rubbings, and postage-stamps are admitted. But a line has to be drawn somewhere, and if the Egyptian hieroglyphic-inscribed papyri are to come within it, why not the clay tablets and cylinders which bear the writings of Babylonia and Assyria? However, these questions have not been left to us to settle, and we must take the national library as we find it.

Beginning with the manuscripts, then, we must notice that besides actual books this collection possesses also a vast number of charters, records, State papers, letters, and miscellaneous documents of enormous historical interest and value. A library is a perfectly suitable place for the preservation of such things as these. As a matter of fact, however, the national records have always formed a large, and, of course, important category by themselves. They had been kept from time immemorial in the Tower, in the Chapter-house at Westminster, and other places, until they were collected and deposited in the new Record Office in Chancery Lane, built specially for their reception and completed in 1857. Nevertheless, a number of records and State papers

have found their way into the library, more particularly through the Cotton collection, but whatever their claim to a place in the archives of the Record Office, it is unlikely that they will ever be removed from the custody of the British Museum.

Anticipating a question which naturally arises in this connection, it may be stated here that Domesday Book is not in the British Museum. It was formerly kept among the Exchequer records in the Chapter-house at Westminster, and so carefully that even Sir Robert Cotton did not get hold of it. It is now in the Record Office.

It will be more convenient to deal first with Manuscript Books, and then with Printed Books, and to take State papers and miscellaneous historical and literary documents last.

Biblical Manuscripts. No original manuscript of any part of the Bible has survived, but the Museum possesses one of the oldest extant copies of the entire Bible. This is the *Codex Alexandrinus* (Roy. MS. 1 D. v.-viii.). It is written in Greek uncials on vellum, and fills four volumes. It was probably executed at Alexandria in the first half of the fifth century, and tradition ascribes it to the penmanship of a noble lady named Thekla. When Cyril Lucar was transferred, in 1621, from the Patriarchate of Alexandria to that of Constantinople, he took this book with him, and in 1627 he presented it to James I., but it did not reach England until after the accession of Charles I.

Apart from some few small papyrus fragments, there are only two Greek Bibles more ancient—viz. the *Codex Vaticanus*, in the Vatican Library, and the *Codex Siniaticus*, found by Tischendorf in a monastery on Mount Sinai, of which part is at Leipzig and part at Petrograd. Both are of the fourth century.

It was suggested to Charles I. that the *Codex Alexandrinus* should be printed in facsimile from copper plates, and that such a work would appear “glorious in history” after his death. “Pish!” replied the King; “I care not what they say of me in history when I am dead.” So no facsimile appeared until 1816-1821, when the Museum published one in printed type of the Old Testament, edited by H. H. Baber, Keeper of the Printed Books. A full-size autotype facsimile was subsequently issued in four volumes between 1879 and 1883, and a reduced facsimile, in collotype, is in progress (see Appendix, 5).

The oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament are later than the oldest copies of the Greek, Latin and Syriac versions. The Museum owns a ninth-century copy of the Pentateuch on vellum, which is “probably the oldest manuscript now in existence of any substantial part of the Bible in Hebrew” (Oriental MS. 4445).

Classical Manuscripts. No original manuscript of any classical author is known to exist. The oldest classical Greek manuscripts are on papyrus, and have been found in Egypt, where the dry climate

has preserved the fragile material, or where the papyri have been used in the making of the cartonnage cases in which mummies of the later period are enclosed. None are known of earlier date than the latter part of the fourth century B.C.

Apart from a few fragments, the most ancient Greek classic in the British Museum consists of parts of Plato's *Phaedo*, assigned to the first half of the third century B.C. It was found in a mummy case (Papyrus 488).

The Museum also possesses the following papyri, all found in Egypt and all unique:—

Hyperides, *Oration against Philippides*, probably first century B.C. (Papyrus 134).

Bacchylides, *Triumphal Odes and Dithyrambs*, probably first century B.C. (Papyrus 733). The Museum published this text in 1897, and an autotype facsimile, now out of print, in 1898.

Aristotle, *The Constitution of Athens*, written about A.D. 100, in four rolls, by four different scribes (Papyrus 131). Apart from this papyrus, this treatise is unknown except for some small fragments preserved at Berlin. The Museum published its third edition of the text in 1892, and issued an autotype facsimile in 1891.

Herodas, *Mimes*. First or second century A.D. (Papyrus 135). This is the only manuscript of Herodas known. The Museum published the text in its volume of *Greek Classical Texts from Papyri*, 1891, and an autotype facsimile in 1892.

Pindar. *Paeans*. Early second century A.D. (Papyrus 1842).

Illuminated Manuscripts. The famous illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages are handsomely represented in the library. The art of illuminating books on vellum was born in Italy in the first century of the Christian era, and brought by the Byzantine and other Continental schools to a high degree of excellence. The Museum has early examples of this foreign work in Gospels written in letters of gold, or in letters of gold on purple-stained vellum. But some of the most wonderful and beautiful examples of pencraft were those executed by the scribes and artists of the Irish monasteries. The great exemplar of their work, *The Book of Kells*, remains in its native land, the property of Trinity College, Dublin, but the British Museum holds a volume almost as wonderful—namely, the late seventh-century book called the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (Cotton MS. Nero D. iv.).

The marvellous pencraft of Ireland was carried by Irish missionaries to Britain. From St Columba's monastery on the little island of Iona, Aidan was sent, in 635, in answer to the request of Oswald of Northumbria for a Christian teacher for his people. To Aidan, Oswald gave Holy Island or Lindisfarne, and there a monastery was built; and there was written the magnificent book known as the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Book of St Cuthbert, or the Book of Durham. Cuthbert was made Bishop of Lindisfarne

in 685, and the book was probably begun soon after his death, five years later. It was written by Bishop Eadfrith in honour of St Cuthbert, and Bilfrith, the anchorite goldsmith, made it a costly case of jewelled gold. It contains the Four Gospels, with St Jerome's preface, and each Gospel is preceded by a full-page coloured design after the Irish style, a portrait of the Evangelist, and a calendar of days on which passages from that Gospel were to be read. The manuscript shows the art of book-work in a stage of transition from pure Irish, or Celtic, to Hiberno-Saxon. The portraits prove Byzantine influence, which at that time dominated the Continental books, and another foreign element is shown by the calendar, which corresponds with the liturgical calendar of Naples, but is two hundred years earlier than any Neapolitan calendar extant, and about a hundred years earlier than any extant Roman liturgy. Its presence is probably due to the visit to Lindisfarne of Archbishop Theodore and his friend Adrian, formerly abbot of a monastery near Naples. Both were scholarly men, "well read in sacred and secular literature, and there daily flowed from them rivers of knowledge to water the hearts of their hearers," says Bede. Doubtless it was from some book of Adrian's that the Lindisfarne scribe copied the calendar.

When the Danish invasion broke the peace of Holy Island, the fugitive monks carried away with them their two treasures—the body of St Cuthbert,

and this Book. They took ship for Ireland, but a storm obliged them to return. The little vessel pitched so violently that the Book fell overboard and sank. But thanks to St Cuthbert's good offices, the monks reached shore in safety, and at low tide recovered the Book, unhurt. It was taken to Durham, and entered in the priory rolls as "the Book of St Cuthbert, which fell in the sea." At the Dissolution, when so many good books perished, this one was preserved in some manner unknown, and a little later was secured by Sir Robert Cotton.

The first English school of illumination grew up at Winchester under Bishop Æthelwold, in the latter half of the tenth century, and produced some fine work, of which several specimens are in the Museum. One of the earliest is a Latin *Psalter* (Harley MS. 2904). It is said that the large ornamental B at the beginning of Psalm i. in this book served as a model for the beginning of English-written psalters for about a century afterwards.

Another interesting Winchester volume in the library is *The Register of New Minster*, the abbey founded by King Edgar in 966 (Stowe MS. 944). The register contains an account of the foundation, lists of the kings, bishops and others connected with New Minster; a transcript of the Life of King Alfred, and other notes of matters concerning the abbey and its services. It also has some drawings, in the best style of English art. One represents Canute placing on the altar of the church a gift of a gold and jewelled

cross ; the King is accompanied by the Queen. Above, is a figure of Christ between the Virgin and St Peter, to whom the abbey was dedicated. Other drawings show the blessed being admitted by St Peter into heaven, while the damned are thrust into the jaws of hell.

Another local school was the East Anglian, which flourished in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It produced magnificent work, represented best, unfortunately, by specimens not in the Museum. The Museum possesses, however, a breviary of Norwich use, which is a very good example of the East Anglian book-art (Stowe MS. 12).

At the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries, English illuminated manuscripts were among the finest in Christendom. A magnificent early fourteenth-century specimen in the national library is known as *Queen Mary's Psalter* (Roy. MS. 2 B. viii.). It is not known when or by whom it was executed. A note added at the end relates that one Baldwin Smith, a London customs officer, intercepted it as it was about to be carried out of the country, and presented it to Queen Mary (Tudor), whose name it has since borne. It contains the Sarum calendar, the Liturgical Psalms, and Canticles, and is decorated with a series of pen-and-ink drawings, representing scenes from Old Testament history, of exceptionally artistic execution. The calendar, according to the usual custom, is illustrated

by miniatures showing typical occupations for the several months, and scenes introducing the appropriate signs of the zodiac. Thus the miniatures for April, for example, show (1) maidens gathering flowers and making garlands; (2) women driving cows and a bull (Taurus). The Psalter contains large miniatures of scenes from the Life of Christ, sometimes divided into four compartments, and mostly within a Gothic framework, together with a series of incongruous drawings of secular scenes. These last are particularly interesting. Ladies of the period go rabbiting, and one puts in a ferret at one side of a hillock, while her companion nets the rabbit on the opposite side. Two champions tilt at each other, not from horses, but from boats. Men shoot small captive birds with large arrows. Boys whip tops with three-lashed whips. And so on. Hawking and hunting and all the fashionable sports are delightfully depicted. Finally, there are drawings illustrating the miracles of the Virgin. In 1912 the Museum published a facsimile of this book, with an introduction by Sir George Warner, late Keeper of the Manuscripts.

The invention of printing did not at once put an end to the production of books in manuscript. These were still valued and admired as works of art, and some late fifteenth and early sixteenth century examples are very beautiful. One such is a *Book of Hours* exhibited in the Grenville Gallery (Huth Bequest. Add. MS. 38,126). This exquisite piece

of work was probably executed at Bruges about 1500. It is written on vellum, with floral and scroll borders, and large and small miniatures, and no description can convey any idea of the careful perfection of detail, the daintiness of execution, and the elegant beauty of this Flemish masterpiece. The artist was a nature-lover. In the borders, birds, flowers and fruit are minutely delineated. One of the most beautiful of the smaller miniatures is inserted in the text of the Mass of All Angels, and shows a naked soul led by the hand of its guardian angel through the fields of Paradise, among flowers and trees.

The calendar usual in books of this class has floral or scroll borders containing medallions about the size of a crown piece, illustrating country and pastoral scenes typical of the months represented. There are also a number of pictures of saints, such as St Veronica with the Vernicle ; St Nicholas blessing three boys in a tub on restoring them to life after their murder ; St Catherine with the wheel ; and the martyrdom of St Apollonia.

But it is the manner rather than the matter of this manuscript which makes it "one of the most perfect examples of Flemish illumination of the period."

Early Printed Books. Special pains have been taken to make the British Museum collection of incunabula—that is, of books printed in the fifteenth century, while the art of printing was yet in its infancy—as complete as possible, and it is now one of the finest, if not the finest, in existence. One of its

chief glories is its copy of the Gutenberg, Mazarin, or Mainz *Bible*, printed probably at Mainz, perhaps by John Gutenberg, c. 1455, 2 vols. folio (King's Library, C. 9. d. 3, 4), exhibited in the King's Library.

The traditions respecting the invention of printing from movable types are contradictory, and nothing is certainly known of this momentous event. Fifteen different Continental cities claim to have produced the pioneer printing-press, but the first tangible evidence comes from Mainz, in the form of some Indulgences printed in 1454 and 1455. These were granted by Pope Nicholas V. to all Christians who supported the King of Cyprus against the Turks. Each Indulgence consists of a single piece of vellum containing either thirty or thirty-one lines of print. The thirty-line example is partly in the type of the Gutenberg Bible, and the thirty-one-line example partly in the type of another early Bible of uncertain provenance. The Museum has specimens of the 1455 Indulgences.

These are the earliest examples of typography bearing a definite date. But the first printed book is generally believed to be the Mainz Bible, perhaps the work of John Gutenberg, who also very probably printed the earlier, at least, of the Indulgences, before executing this magnificent book. The Mainz Bible illustrates the remarkable fact that the art of printing was born practically perfect, for its workmanship has never been excelled even by the most skilful

printer and the most elaborate machinery of modern times. The date to be assigned for its beginning is not earlier than 1450, and it is known, on the testimony of a manuscript colophon in the Paris copy, to have been completed in 1456. Some examples are on paper; others, like the Museum specimen, on vellum. The type is a bold, clear gothic or black-letter, modelled on the handwriting used for the Bibles and devotional books of the Middle Ages. As is the case with all the earliest printed books, there is no title-page, and place, printer and date are not mentioned.

The new art was quickly taken up and industriously practised. We may instance another from the large Museum collection of books printed in Germany before the end of the fifteenth century. This is the first edition of *De Imitatione Christi* (C. 10. c. 16), generally attributed to Thomas Haemmerlein of Kempen, otherwise Thomas à Kempis. The *editio princeps* was printed by Gunther Zainer at Augsberg in 1471 or 1472, as part of a collection of tracts. The Museum owns some 5000 editions of this world-famous book of devotion.

The German printers spread the practice of printing all over Europe, beginning, after their own land, with Italy, where more printing-presses were set up than in any other country. Conrad Sweynheim and Arnold Pannartz were the first of the craft to tread Italian soil, and on their way to Rome they halted at the monastery of Subiaco

and under the patronage of the abbot, Cardinal Turrecremata, produced Cicero, *De Oratore*, and some other books, in a pleasing type, half-gothic, half-roman. They then proceeded to Rome, where, within five years, they printed over eleven thousand volumes.

Venice was the next Italian city, after Rome, to learn the art of printing, which was introduced there by John of Spires in 1469. Some famous illustrated books came from the Venetian presses. An edition of Malermi's translation of the Bible may be instanced, which was printed in 1490 by Giovanni Ragazzo (IB. 23,752), which has nearly four hundred woodcuts, some adapted from other works, but most of them original. A curious example is that illustrating the text: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." It shows an open-mouthed idiot, his hair stuck with feathers, riding a stick as hobby-horse, and carrying a toy windmill. He is mocked by boys, one of whom walks behind and teases him with a bramble-spray.

Another very celebrated illustrated book was issued at Venice by Aldus Manutius, probably the most famous of all Italian printers. This was the *editio princeps* of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or Dream of Poliphilus, 1499, of which the Museum possesses six copies, one from the Grenville Library (G. 10,564), and the rest from other sources.

Aldus was notable not so much for his skill in printing as for his work as the pioneer of good

literature in popular form. By his invention of the small but clear Aldine or italic type he was able to produce cheap, handy books, and his first venture of this kind, the *Virgil* of 1501, measuring six by three-and-a-half inches, met with immediate success.

Of all these early Italian books the British Museum possesses examples.

As specimens of French incunabula in the library we may notice one or two books remarkable for their illustrations, beginning with *La Cité de Dieu*, Abbeville, Jean du Pré and Pierre Gérard, 1486-1487, 2 vols. fol. (Grenville Library, 3805. e. 2). This has been described as one of the finest French books of the century. It has a frontispiece showing St Augustine writing the book, and Raoul de Preules, its translator, presenting his translation to the King of France. One of the most striking of the twenty-three other woodcuts represents a man in a tree, to whom an angel offers a crown, while a devil tempts him with money. Death is sawing the tree asunder, and two dragons await their victim below. The woodcuts are supposed to be the work of Paris artists. The Museum owns many early editions of this book, including the *editio princeps*, printed at Subiaco, in 1467, by Sweynheim and Pannartz.

It has also a fine copy of the *Danse Macabre*, Paris, Guiot Marchand, 1492 (Huth Bequest, IB. 39,618). This work, designed to afford instruction in right living and holy dying, was extremely popular in the Middle Ages, both in book form and

as paintings in churches and elsewhere. There was an example painted in the north cloister of Old St Paul's, for instance. The present volume is copiously illustrated by woodcuts showing how Death, represented as an animated skeleton, comes to persons of all ages and conditions and compels them to join in his dance. He seizes alike Pope, Emperor, King, Cardinal, Merchant, Doctor, Hermit and Infant; Queen, Duchess, Bride, Nun and Sorceress. An edition printed at Lyons by Matthias Huss in 1499 (IB. 41,735), also acquired through the Huth Bequest, includes some woodcuts showing Death visiting printers in their printing-office and the bookseller among his books—the earliest known representations of the printing-office and bookshop. In the one, the compositor is seen seated before his case of type, the "copy," hung on a lath before him; the composing-stick is in his hand, and behind him are the press, with its big wooden screw, and a man with a mallet. In the other, the bookseller is sitting at his counter, reading, and some seventeen or so volumes occupy the shelves behind him, or lie on the counter.

The best work of the early printers was put into church service-books. It is curious that the large majority of English service-books were printed abroad, generally at Paris or Rouen, but also at Antwerp, Basle, Venice and elsewhere. The Paris printers, Jean du Pré and Philippe Pigouchet, and the publishers, Simon Vostre and Antoine

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Vérard, were among the chief producers of these books.

A beautiful *Horæ ad Usum Sarum*, Paris, P. Pigouchet, 1501 (C. 29. h. 12), is exhibited in the King's Library. It is ornamented with woodcut illustrations and borders illuminated by hand in gold and colours. The Museum possesses a number of books of this class, and this is one of the choicest specimens.

Antoine Vérard was one of the most industrious of the early Paris booksellers. Several of his *editions de luxe* were bought by Henry VII., and came to the national collection with the Old Royal Library.

England and Scotland are the only countries which learned printing from a native and not from a foreigner. England's protoprinter, William Caxton, was a London apprentice who went to Bruges as a wool merchant and later became secretary to the Duchess of Burgundy. Either in Cologne or in Bruges he acquired a practical knowledge of typography, and with the help of Colard Mansion, who had a printing-office in Bruges, produced there his *Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*, a translation of a fashionable romance, probably in 1475 (King's Library. C. 11. c. 1) and *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, in 1475 or 1476. (Two copies. Grenville Library, 10,543, and C. 10. b. 23.) In 1476 he returned to England and set up a press at the sign of the Red Pale, close to Westminster Abbey. A panel in the vestibule of the Westminster

Palace Hotel professes to mark the exact spot. Here he printed *The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres*, 1477, and other books. The best of the three examples of the *Dictes or Sayengis* in the British Museum was acquired through the Huth Bequest (IB. 5505).

A famous but exceedingly rare book in the library is *The Book of St Albans*, St Albans, 1486, fol. (G. 10547). It was printed by an anonymous printer known as The Schoolmaster. It is the first printed English book dealing with field sports and heraldry, and the first book with illustrations printed in colours. On the strength of the words, "Explicit Dam Julyans Barnes in her boke of Huntyng," which close one of the treatises it contains, it has long been supposed that the work was written by a Dame Juliana Berners, prioress of Sopwell, near St Albans. But no such lady is known to history in any capacity whatever. Some think that the book was compiled as well as printed by The Schoolmaster. The British Museum, however, still catalogues it under BERNERS, JULIANA (*Dame*).

The Museum copy has a remarkable history. Towards the close of the eighteenth century it was turned out of the library of a house in Lincolnshire with a number of other books condemned as rubbish. The gardener rescued it, with some of its companions. At the gardener's death his son threw away the other volumes, but kept the St Albans book. When the son died, his widow sold it and some other books

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to a pedlar for ninepence. The pedlar sold his purchase to a Gainsborough chemist to be used as shop paper. Noticing its curious woodcuts, the chemist offered the St Albans book to a stationer for a guinea. The stationer would not waste a guinea on it, but offered to display it in his window. This brought an offer of £5 from a gentleman of the neighbourhood, whereupon the stationer changed his mind, bought it from the chemist for £2, and sold it to a bookseller for £7, 7s. Mr Grenville then purchased it for £70, and at his death it came, with the rest of his library, to the nation. One of the only two complete copies known was sold in 1914 for £1800.

The second edition of the St Albans book was printed by Caxton's successor, Wynken de Worde, at Westminster, 1496. One of the two Museum copies is in the Grenville Library (G. 10,548). This edition contains an additional section: "The treatise of fysshinge with an angle."

A book famous in history is shown in the King's Library. This is the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martin. Lutherum*, written by Henry VIII., and printed by his Majesty's printer, Richard Pynson, in 1521 (C. 25. k. 2). This is the work which gained for Henry VIII. and his successors on the English throne the title of "Defender of the Faith," conferred on the royal author by Pope Leo X. "Some of the ornaments are copied from designs made by Holbein for [the printer] Froben of Basle."¹

¹ *Official Guide to the Exhibition in the King's Library, 1901.*

The Museum owns two other copies of this book, of which one is in the Grenville Library. It also has editions printed in Rome, Strasburg, Lyons, Antwerp and other foreign places.

Skipping a century or so, we find treasures of a more literary and perhaps more general interest in the early editions of Shakespeare. The Museum owns four copies of the *editio princeps* of Shakespeare's collected works—the "First Folio"—but the best is that in the Grenville Library (G. 1161), the other three being imperfect. This book was published in the Barbican at the price of twenty shillings, and registered at Stationers' Hall on 8th November 1623. The title-page reads as follows:—*Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies: London: Printed by Isaac Jaggard & Ed. Blount. 1623.*" The volume contains a copperplate portrait of the dramatist, by Martin Droeshout.

The Huth Bequest added to the collection of Shakespeare editions the quarto *Richard II.*, 1597, *Richard III.*, 1597, and the *Comedie of Sir John Falstaff and The Merrie Wives of Windsor*, 1602, and thus almost completed the Museum set of Shakespeare quartos printed before 1664.

A book of historical interest, though no treasure from a typographical point of view, is the work attributed by some to Charles I. and by others to John Gauden, Bishop of Exeter. This is the

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Εἰκὼν Βασιλικη̄ : *The Portraiture of his sacred Maiestie in his solitudes and sufferings*, 1648
[London (?), February 16⁴⁸
49], 8^o] (C. 59. a. 24).

The numerous examples of the *Eikon* in the Museum include two copies of this extremely rare first edition. Many editions were issued in 1648, all of which have been carefully distinguished by bibliographers. The present copy has some errors in pagination ; in the copy included among the Thomason Tracts, and marked by Thomason as "the first impression," these errors are corrected.

About fifty editions appeared within six months of the King's death, to meet the great demand for this work ; and within a year of publication it had been translated into Latin, French, Dutch and German. For Milton's reply to the "King's Book," Εἰκονοκλαστη̄, 1649, there was no demand at all. One of the 1649 editions of the *Eikon* is of a long and narrow shape, intended to symbolise a coffin, in memory of the royal martyr. A great deal has been written both to prove and to disprove the King's authorship of this book, but Mr Edward Almack, who has made an exhaustive study of all the available evidence, has no doubt that the book was written, as it professes to be, by King Charles I.

We will close this brief survey of a few notable books in the national collection with a work which is remarkable, first and foremost, for sheer size. This is the Chinese encyclopædia, *Ch'in Ting Ku*

Chin T'u Shu Chi Ch'eng, 1674-1723. This stupendous compilation was planned by the Emperor K'ang Hsi, and carried out by Ch'en Meng-lei. It consists of over 800,000 pages, contained in 745 substantial volumes. It is a collection of extracts from old Chinese literature on all conceivable subjects, forming an encyclopædia which is calculated to be three or four times as large as the largest European work of the same class. It was printed from movable types of metal, and not, according to the usual Chinese custom, from wooden blocks, and it is illustrated by pictures, maps and diagrams. It is believed that not more than a hundred copies were struck off, and that the British Museum example is the only complete copy of the first edition known outside China. That in the Bibliothèque Nationale is incomplete. The Museum copy is stowed away behind glazed doors beneath the tables in the King's Library.

The list of subjects dealt with is most comprehensive, as might be expected. The work is divided into six main parts, as follows :—

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Celestial Matters. | 4. Science. |
| 2. Geography. | 5. Literature. |
| 3. Human Relationships. | 6. Polity. |

The arrangement is not alphabetical, but according to subject. The difficulties of a subject catalogue have already been touched upon (Ch. XI.), and the ingenious Chinese do not show themselves more

adept in classifying their knowledge than the Western nations. Their classification is sometimes very unexpected. To take at random some of the things dealt with, we find, besides such orthodox heads as Agriculture, Bees, and so on, miscellaneous matters such as

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cooking-pots, | Principle of harmony in |
| Clever contrivances, | the soul, |
| Dignity of demeanour, | Rain clothes, |
| Steamed dumplings, | Watchfulness over oneself when alone. |

There are many sub-sections dealing with women, who are spoken of as Beauties of the Inner Apartments. Mr Lionel Giles, who has drawn up the British Museum official index to this work, to which I am indebted for most of the foregoing data, makes the interesting observation that the Chinese encyclopædia "forms a repertory of female biography such as no other nation, even at the present day, can make any pretence of rivalling."

Bindings. The Museum possesses many beautiful bindings. In old days the cover of a book was not merely a protection more or less perfunctorily decorated, but a real work of art. Wood and leather, ivory and enamel, gold, silver and jewels, velvet, satin and embroidery—all were used for the service and ornament of books.

For the intrinsic interest of the thing it may be pardoned if for a moment we leave the library to

glance at an object in the Department of Mediæval Antiquities. This is the Early Byzantine leaf of an ivory diptych, or waxed tablet (for receiving writing) with two covers. The diptych was a Roman invention afterwards adopted for Christian liturgical purposes. The specimen in question is extremely fine, and bears a carved figure of the Archangel Michael. Its connection with the subject in hand is that it may have been part of one of the books brought to England by St Augustine. (see Maskell, *Mon. Rit.*, I. xv. and *supra*, p. 1).

To return to the library. A Psalter written and decorated in the twelfth century for Melissenda, Countess of Anjou, has wooden covers overlaid with ivory exquisitely carved with sacred and allegorical subjects in Byzantine style, and studded with small turquoises and rubies (Egerton MS. 1139).

A book of Gospels written in the ninth century has a fourteenth-century wooden binding plated with silver fastened by silver nails. On the upper cover is a sunk panel containing a figure of Christ, seated, in high relief, the hollow within containing relics. This cover is studded with brightly coloured jewels, modern substitutes for the lost originals. The four corners once held the symbols of the Evangelists in blue enamel, but only two remain. The lower cover is neither jewelled nor enamelled, and the Agnus Dei occupies the centre (Add. MS. 11,848).

A charming miniature volume containing a sixteenth-century metrical version of the Psalms

has a cover of gold, worked in open leaf tracery. This was intended to hang from a lady's girdle by rings fixed at the top edges of the covers. It is said to have been given by Queen Anne Boleyn, on the scaffold, to one of her maids of honour (Stowe MS. 956).

Another book of metrical Psalms—Sternhold and Hopkins version, 1623—is bound in silk covered with silver embroidery, with needle-worked portraits of a cavalier and lady, thought by some to represent Charles I. and Henrietta Maria. On the bookmark is the couplet: “From prison bring youre Captive King.” The volume is enclosed in an embroidered bag, containing also a pair of elaborately decorated kid gloves. It is notable for its fine state of preservation, and is said to have belonged to one of Queen Henrietta Maria's ladies-in-waiting (C. 17. b. 27).

Magna Charta. Turning to the treasures which are not books, though often the occasion or foundation of books, we find a large collection of ancient charters, and foremost among them Magna Charta. There is a contemporary copy of the Articles of Liberties, afterwards incorporated in Magna Charta, and there are three contemporary copies of the Great Charter itself.

The Articles of Liberties (Add. MS. 4838) were drawn up and received the King's sanction as a preliminary to the drafting of the Charter, in which they were subsequently embodied. Part of the Great Seal still remains attached. It has been

suggested that this document may have passed, with other English records, into the hands of Louis of France during the civil wars which closed the reign of John; and that it was then handed over to the Regent and deposited at Lambeth Palace, where it remained till, at Laud's desire, before his impeachment, his friend, Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, took it into his own keeping. It afterwards passed through various hands till Philip, Earl Stanhope, presented it to the British Museum in 1769. The Museum publishes an autotype facsimile.

Magna Charta was granted on 15th June 1215. Of the three copies in the British Museum, the chief is the Cotton Charter xiii. 31. a. This is a *corrected* copy, with contemporary amendments, and for this reason it has been sometimes considered as further from the original than some others. But its very imperfections are testimony to its being nearer to the actual original, if not the actual original itself, than a fair copy would be. It measures 14½ inches in breadth and 20½ inches in length, and it is written in Latin in a small Norman hand. It bears no signature—no signature of any English monarch occurs anywhere earlier than that of Richard II.—but it is authenticated by the Great Seal of England. It suffered severely in the fire at Ashburnham House in 1731, so that most of it is now illegible, and the Great Seal is reduced to a mere lump of wax. The curious fact has been pointed out that the least damaged parts remaining are the most famous

passages in the whole of the Charter---viz. Ch. XXXIX.: "No freeman shall be seized, or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way destroyed; nor will we condemn him, nor will we commit him to prison, excepting by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the laws of the land"; and Ch. XL.: "To none will we sell, to none will we deny, to none will we delay right or justice."

There is an apocryphal story that this document fell into the hands of Sir Robert Cotton's tailor, who was about to cut it up when Sir Robert appeared in the nick of time and purchased the treasure for a small sum. It was found, however, among the records in Dover Castle by Sir Edward Dering, who wrote to Sir Robert Cotton on 10th May 1630: "I have heere y^e Charter of K. John dat. att Running Meade: by y^e first safe and sure messenger it is your's. So are y^e Saxon Charters, as fast as I can copy them; but in y^e mean time I will close K. John in a boxe and send him."

Another copy of *Magna Charta* in the Cotton Library (Cotton MS. Augustus ii., 106) is of similar appearance and handwriting, but is in much better condition and has fewer emendations. Its history is unknown, until it was given to Cotton by Humphrey Wyems in 1628. A third copy is in the Harleian collection (Harl. MS. 746).

The Museum publishes an autotype facsimile of the Cotton MS. Augustus ii. 106.

As we have already noted, it was an old custom

to deposit copies of State documents in the monastic libraries, so that they might not be lost. Copies of Magna Charta were distributed for this purpose to every diocese, perhaps to every county, and such copies still exist in the Cathedral libraries of Lincoln and Salisbury.

Royal Autographs. The British Museum owns a complete series of autographs of English sovereigns from Richard II. to Victoria, attached to documents of various kinds. To note briefly the contents of some of these: Richard II. agrees to return the Castle of Brest to the Duke of Brittany (Cotton MS. Vesp. F. iii. f. 3) ; Henry V., in his own handwriting, gives orders as to the French prisoners taken at Agincourt, and the confinement of the Duke of Orleans in Pontefract Castle (Cotton MS. Vesp. F. iii. f. 5) ; Henry VIII. writes a grateful and affectionate letter to Cardinal Wolsey (Cotton MS. Vesp. F. xiii. f. 71) ; Jane the Quene (Lady Jane Grey) writes from the Tower to the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey to announce her entry into possession of the kingdom of England, and calling for his allegiance against the "fayned and untrewe clayme of the Lady Marye, bastard daughter to our great uncle Henry th'eight," 10th July, "the first yere of our reign" [1553]. (Lansdowne MS. 1236. f. 24.) Dated only nine days later is an order on behalf of, but not signed by, Queen Mary, that she should be proclaimed Queen in the county of Sussex, and denouncing "the ladie Jane, a quene of a new and

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pretie inuencion" (Add. MS. 33,230. f. 21). In a little book of prayers, believed to have been used by Lady Jane on the scaffold, she writes in her beautiful hand a touching message to her father, offering him comfort for the loss of his children, and promising to pray for him in another world, signing herself: "youre gracys humble daughter, Jane Duddley" (Harl. MS. 2342).

Queen Elizabeth, in her own hand, drafts a characteristic speech to the Commons, 2nd January 1567, giving them a piece of her royal mind, and advising them to "let this my displing stand you in stede of sorar strokes never to tempt too far a prince's paciens" (Cotton Charter. iv. 38 (2)).

Mary Queen of Scots writes in French to Elizabeth of England from her prison at Sheffield praying that she might have a priest of the Church Catholic to console and exhort her, and that she might be allowed to write to her only child (Cotton MS. Caligula, C. iii. f. 239 b.). In another document in the library an eyewitness describes this unhappy Queen's execution: "Then lying upon the blocke most quietly and stretching out her arms [she] cryed 'In manus tuas Domine,' etc., three or fowre tymes, then she lying very still upon the blocke, one of the executioners holding of her slitely with one of his handes, she endured two strokes of the other executioner with an axe, she makyng very smale noyse or none at all, and not stirring any parte of her from the place where she lay. . . . Then one of the

executioners espied her little dogg which was crept under her clothes, which could not be gotten forth but by force, yet afterward wold not departe from the dead corpes but came and lay betweene her head and her shoulders" (Lansdowne MS. 51. f. 99-102).

An interesting little collection of royal autographs is contained in an illuminated manuscript Book of Hours which probably belonged to a lady of the Court in the time of the seventh and eighth Henries. Its owner used it as an album in which she collected the autographs of her distinguished friends. At her invitation, no doubt, Henry VII. wrote in this book: "Madame I pray you Remembre me, your lovying maistre, Henry R." His Queen, Elizabeth, Queen Katherine of Aragon, and the Princess (afterwards Queen) Mary, all write requests that their friend will remember them in her prayers, and Henry VIII. merely signs his name (Add. MS. 17,012).

The original manuscripts of compositions by royal authors include Edward VI.'s *Treatise on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*, 1549; the *Prayers of Queen Katherine Parr*, translated into Latin, French and Italian by the Princess (afterwards Queen) Elizabeth, 1545; and James I.'s *Basilicon Doron*, written for his son Henry, Prince of Wales.

Among the later letters, Queen Henrietta Maria writes to her son Charles, then an urchin of eight,

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afterwards Charles II., a motherly scolding because "I heere that you will not take phisike," and telling him that if he will not take it to-morrow "I must come to you and make you take it" (Harley MS. 6988. f. 95).

Charles II. writes in French to his sister Henrietta, the day after his Restoration: "J'ay la test si furieusement étourdy par l'acclamation du peuple et le quantité d'affaires que je ne scay si j'escrive du sen ou non ; s'est pour quoy vous me pardonneres si je ne vous dy pas davantage, seulement que je suis tout a vous, C." Canterbury, 26th May [1660] (Add. MS. 18,738. f. 102).

One of the autographs of Queen Victoria is her signature pencilled in large capital letters, at the age of four (Add. MS. 18,204. f. 12).

Miscellaneous Historical Documents. Among these is a Resolution passed by a Council of War after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, dated August, 1588. "We whose names are hereunder written," it runs, "have determined and agreeed in counsaile to folowe and pursue the Spanish Fleete untill we have cleared oure owne coaste and brought the Frithe weste of us, and then to returne backe again, as well to revictuall our ships (which stande in extreme scarsite) as alsoe to guard and defend oure own coaste at home ; with further protestations that, if oure wantes of victualles and munitione were suppliede, we wold pursue them to the furthest that they durste have gone." This bears the signatures

of Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral ; Sir Francis Drake ; Sir John Hawkins, and others (Add. MS. 33,740. f. 6).

Oliver Cromwell is well represented in the collection, not only by a number of autograph letters, but by the original order of the Council of State, issued from Whitehall, requiring the attendance of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London at the proclamation, on 12th December 1653, of "his Highness Oliver Cromwell" as "Lord Protector of the Common Wealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging." This bears the autograph signatures of the members of the Council of State (Add. MS. 18,739. f. 1).

A later manuscript dated from Whitehall is the proclamation of 1st August 1745, setting a price of £30,000 upon the head of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender (Add. MS. 37,176). The Prince landed in the Hebrides the next day, and three weeks later issued a counter-proclamation, in print, dated from "Our Camp at Kinlocheill," describing himself as Prince of Wales and Regent of the Kingdoms of Scotland, England, France and Ireland, and offering £30,000 for the apprehension of the Elector of Hanover (George II., then absent in Hanover), "whether landed, or attempting to land, in any part of His Majesty's Dominions." A copy of this also is in the library (C. 18e-2 (93)).

Among the Nelson manuscripts is a letter written to Lady Hamilton shortly before the battle of

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Trafalgar. The postscript reads: "Oct. 20th [1805]. In the morning, we were close to the mouth of the streights, but the wind had not come far enough to the westward to allow the combined fleets to weather the shoals off Trafalgar (*sic*) ; but they were counted as far as forty sail of ships of war, which I suppose to be 34 of the Line and six frigates. A group of them was seen off the lighthouse of Cadiz this morning, but it blows so very fresh and thick weather that I rather believe they will go into the Harbour before night. May God Almighty give us success over these fellows and enable us 'to get a Peace.'" This is endorsed by Lady Hamilton: "This letter was found open on *his* desk and brought to Lady Hamilton by Captain Hardy. Oh, miserable and wretched Emma ! Oh glorious and happy Nelson ! " (Egerton MS. 1614. f. 125).

In the handwriting of the great Duke of Wellington the library possesses the enumeration of the cavalry under his command at the battle of Waterloo, which he wrote and gave to Sir John Elley, Deputy Adjutant General, before the battle (Add. MS. 7140).

General Gordon is represented by his Journal written at Khartoum. The last passage, written on 14th December 1884, reads: "We are going to send down 'Bordeen' to-morrow with this journal. If I was in command of the 200 men of Expeditionary Force, which are all that are necessary for moment, I should stop just below Halfyeh and attack Arabs at that place before I came on here to Kartoum. I

should then communicate with North Fort and act according to circumstances. *Now mark this*, if Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than 200 men, does not come in 10 days, *the town may fall*, and I have done my best for the honor of our country. Good-bye. C. G. Gordon" (Add. MS. 34,479. f. 108). This Journal, with other papers, was bequeathed to the nation by General Gordon's sister.

Literary Autographs, etc. Of autograph signatures, letters and other manuscripts of literary interest the number in the library is almost bewildering. Foremost comes the signature of Shakespeare, on a deed of mortgage relating to a house at Blackfriars (Egerton MS. 1787). There are only six authentic signatures of Shakespeare extant, and this is one of them. The name of "William Shakespeare" is also written in a book in the library, a copy of the first edition of Florio's *Montaigne*, 1603, but its genuineness is questioned. Another copy of the same book bears the autograph of Ben Jonson (C. 28. m. 8).

There is also Milton's Bible, in which he has written notes of the births, etc., of himself and members of his family (Add. MS. 32,310).

Besides these giants of English literature, many other famous personages, both English and foreign, are represented in the library by letters, original compositions and other documents: Spenser and Raleigh; Dryden and Newton; Swift, Defoe and Pope; Steele and Addison; Goldsmith and Sir

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Joshua Reynolds ; Johnson and Boswell ; Burns and Scott ; Coleridge, Wordsworth and Lamb ; Byron, Shelley and Keats ; Tennyson and Browning ; Dickens and Thackeray ; Carlyle and Macaulay ; Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot ; Herbert Spencer and Thomas Hardy.

Among foreign celebrities there are authentic writings, chiefly letters, of Erasmus and Luther ; of Albert Dürer ; of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci ; of Galileo ; of Reubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt ; of Montaigne, Corneille and Racine ; Voltaire and Rousseau ; Victor Hugo ; Goethe and Kant, Schiller and Heine.

One of the most important items in the library, which belongs neither to the category of manuscripts nor that of books, is the Buckler collection of drawings, a unique and invaluable record of the churches, castles and other ancient buildings of England and Wales as they appeared in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The drawings are the work chiefly of John Chessell Buckler, but many are by his father, John Buckler, and his son, Charles Alban Buckler. They number many thousands, and fill nearly 1000 volumes. The greater part was acquired by purchase spread over three years and completed in 1900. A supplementary collection was presented in 1904 by Mr C. A. Buckler, and in 1905 a final instalment was received under his will.

XIV
APPENDIX

1

CHIEF ACCESSIONS TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

THE nucleus of the national library is the Cottonian Library of Historical MSS., Charters, Records, State Papers, Illuminated MSS., etc., presented to the nation by Sir John Cotton in 1700. This collection and the subsequent additions thereto, notably the Harleian MSS., were joined with the Sloane MSS. and Printed Books when the British Museum was incorporated in 1753. The following are the chief accessions to the British Museum Library thus formed. Smaller items, though often, relatively, of equal importance, are omitted :—

1756 **Madox MSS.** Bequeathed to the Cottonian Library.

1757 **Old Royal MSS. and Printed Books.** Given by King George II.

1762 **Thomason Tracts.** Given by King George III.

1765 **Birch MSS. and Printed Books.** Bequeathed by the Rev. Thomas Birch, D.D.

1768 **Onslow Collection of Printed Bibles.** Bequeathed by the Right Hon. Arthur Onslow.

1778-9 **Hawkins Printed Books on Music.** Part bequeathed by Sir John Hawkins.

1779 **Garrick Collection of Printed Plays.** Bequeathed by David Garrick.

1799 **Cracherode Printed Books.** Bequeathed by the Rev. C. M. Cracherode.

1807 **Lansdowne MSS.** Bought.

1813 **Hargrave MSS.** Bought.

1815 **Von Moll Printed Books.** Bought with funds bequeathed to the Cottonian Library by Major Edwards.

1818 **Burney MSS. and Printed Books.** Bought.

1820 **Banks Printed Books.** Bequeathed by Sir Joseph Banks, Bart.

1823 **King's MSS. and Printed Books.** Given by King George IV.

1825 **Rich MSS. (Oriental.)** Bought.

1825 **Colt Hoare Printed Books. (Italian.)** Given by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart.

1829 **Egerton MSS.** Bequeathed by the Earl of Bridgewater, with funds for maintaining and augmenting the collection, and for paying the salary of an Egerton Librarian.

1831 **Arundel MSS.** Part bought, part exchanged.

1841 **Tatham and Pachot MSS. (Syriac.)** Bought.

1844 **Welsh School and Cymrodorian Society MSS. (Welsh.)** Given by the Welsh School and the Cymrodorian Society.

1846 **Church Missionary Society MSS. (Ethiopian.)** Given by the Church Missionary Society.

1847 **Grenville Printed Books.** Bequeathed by the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.

1847 **Yule MSS. (Persian, Arabic, Hindustani.)** Gift.

1847 **Michael Library. (Hebrew.)** Bought.

1847 **Morrison Library (Chinese.)** Bought.

1864 **Cureton MSS. (Oriental.)** Bought.

1865 **Almanzi Library. (Hebrew.)** Bought.

1865 **Malcolm MSS. (Persian.)** Bought.

1865 **Erskine MSS. (Oriental.)** Bought.

1875 **Schneider Printed Books. (History of the Reformation.)** Bought.

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1878 **Elliot MSS.** (Indian.) Bought.

1878 **Transcripts of French State and Official Documents.**
By exchange with the Bibliothèque Nationale.

1883 **Stowe MSS.** Bought.

1888-95 **Colonial Newspapers.** Given by the Royal Colonial Institute.

1899 **Rothschild Illuminated MSS.** Bequeathed by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild.

1900 **Ashbee Printed Books.** Bequeathed.

1898-1899-1900 **Buckler Drawings.** Bought.

1904 **Buckler Drawings** (additional). Given by Charles Alban Buckler.

1905 **Buckler Drawings.** Bequeathed by Charles Alban Buckler.

1910 **Huth MSS. and Printed Books.** Bequeathed by Alfred Henry Huth.

1913 **Books and Papers on Philately.** Bequeathed by the Earl of Crawford.

1914 **Fund (c. £10,000) for Purchase of Early English Printed Books.** Bequeathed by William Carew Hazlitt.

GOVERNMENT OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The Trustees of the British Museum were incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1753, and are as follows :—

The Archbishop of Canterbury.
The Lord Chancellor.
The Speaker of the House of Commons.
The Lord President of the Council.
The First Lord of the Treasury.
The Lord Privy Seal.
The First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Lord Steward.

The Lord Chamberlain.
 The three Principal Secretaries of State.
 The Bishop of London.
 The Chancellor of the Exchequer.
 The Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.
 The Master of the Rolls.
 The Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.
 The Attorney-General.
 The Solicitor-General.
 The President of the Royal Society.
 The President of the College of Physicians.
 * The President of the Society of Antiquaries.
 * The President of the Royal Academy of Arts.
 * The Royal Trustee.
 Trustees representing Founders' Families — viz.
 Sloane (two); Cotton (two); Harleian (two);
 Townleian,* Elgin,* Knight,*
 and fifteen other Trustees elected by the above.

3

PRINCIPAL LIBRARIANS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1756 Gowin Knight, F.R.S.
 1772 Matthew Maty, M.D., F.R.S.
 1776 Charles Morton, M.D., F.R.S.
 1799 Joseph Planta.
 1827 Sir Henry Ellis, K.H.
 1856 Sir Anthony Panizzi, K.C.B.
 1866 John Winter Jones.
 1878 Sir E. A. Bond.
 1888 Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, K.C.B.
 (In 1898 the title of Director was added to that
 of Principal Librarian.)
 1909 Sir Frederick G. Kenyon, K.C.B.

* Added later.

KEEPERS OF MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED BOOKS

In the early days of the British Museum the title of Keeper was unknown, and the duties were performed by the Under-Librarians. No lists of these officers are available, but I believe the following to be substantially correct :

Keepers of Manuscripts

1756 Charles Morton, M.D.
1776 Joseph Planta.
1799 Rev. Robert Nares.
1807 Francis Douce.
1812 (Sir) Henry Ellis.
1827 Rev. Josiah Forshall.
1837 (Sir) Frederic Madden.
1866 (Sir) E. A. Bond.
1878 (Sir) E. Maunde Thompson.
1888 E. J. L. Scott.
1904 (Sir) G. F. Warner.
1911 J. P. Gilson.

Keepers of Printed Books

1756 M. Maty, M.D.
1765 (?) Rev. Samuel Harper.
1803 Rev. William Beloe.
1806 (Sir) Henry Ellis.
1812 Rev. H. H. Baber.
1837 (Sir) A. Panizzi.
1856 John Winter Jones.
1866 Thomas Watts.
1869 W. B. Rye.
1875 George Bullen.
1890 Richard Garnett, C.B.
1899 G. K. Fortescue.

1912 A. W. K. Miller.
1914 G. F. Barwick.

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SOME OFFICIAL CATALOGUES, ETC., OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM
LIBRARY

I. Manuscripts

Catalogue of Ancient MSS. in the British Museum. With autotype facsimiles. Part I., Greek, 1881 (out of print). Part II., Latin, 1883, £3.

Catalogue of Greek Papyri in the British Museum. With Texts. Vol. I., 1893 (out of print). Vol. II., 1898, £2, 10s. Vol. III., 1907, £2, 10s. Vol. IV., 1910, £4.

Greek Classical Texts from Papyri, 1891, 7s. 6d.

Autotype Facsimiles of Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Vol. I., 1893, £7, 5s. Vol. II., 1898, £5. Vol. III., 1907, £3, 3s.

Codex Alexandrinus. Printed in facsimile. Old Testament, 1816-1821. 3 vols., £18.

Codex Alexandrinus. Full-size autotype facsimile. Vol. I., 1881 (out of print). Vol. II., 1883, £9. Vol. III., 1883, £5. Vol. IV., 1879 (out of print).

Codex Alexandrinus. In reduced facsimile. New Testament and Clementine Epistles, 1909, £1, 10s. Old Testament, Part I., Genesis-Ruth, 1915, £1, 15s.

Facsimiles of Biblical MSS. in the British Museum. With descriptive text by F. G. Kenyon, 1900, 10s.

Aristotle on the Constitution of Athens. Text. 3rd edition, 1892, 10s. 6d. Autotype facsimile, 1891, £2, 2s.

Index to Charters and Rolls in the Department of MSS. in the British Museum. Vol. I., 1900, £1, 15s. Vol. II., 1912, £1, 15s.

Catalogue of Romances. Vol. I., by H. L. D. Ward, 1883 (out of print). Vol. II., by H. L. D. Ward, 1893, £1. Vol. III., by J. A. Herbert, 1910, £1, 15s.

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Reproductions from Illuminated MSS., 3 series, 2nd edition, 1910, 5s. each series.

Facsimiles of Autographs, 5 series, 1896-1900, 7s. 6d. each series. (Series II. out of print.)

Autotype Facsimile of the Articles of Magna Charta, 2s. 6d. ; vellum, 10s.

Autotype Facsimile of Magna Charta, 1884, 2s 6d. ; vellum, 7s. (out of print).

Guide to the Exhibited Manuscripts, 1912. Part I., 6d. Part II., 6d. Part III., 4d.

Subject Index to MSS. in the British Museum. In progress. To be seen in the Students' Room, Department of MSS.

2. Printed Books

General Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum. 1881. In progress. To be seen in the Reading-room.

Catalogue of Books in the Library of the British Museum printed in England, etc., to the year 1640. 3 vols., 1884, £1, 10s.

Catalogue of Books printed in the Fifteenth Century now in the British Museum. Part I., 1908, £1, 15s. Part II., 1912, £1, 15s. Part III., 1914, £1, 15s. Part IV., 1916. In progress.

Catalogues of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers and Manuscripts relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, collected by George Thomason, 1640-1661. By G. K. Fortescue. 2 vols., 1908., £1, 10s.

List of the Contents of the Three Collections of Books, Pamphlets, and Journals in the British Museum relating to the French Revolution. By G. K. Fortescue. 1899, 2s.

List of Bibliographies, Classified Catalogues, and Indexes in the Reading-room of the British Museum. 2nd edition, 1889 (out of print).

**List of Catalogues of English Book Sales, 1676-1900,
now in the British Museum.** 1915. 12s. 6d.

The Huth Bequest. 1910. £1, 2s. 6d.

**Subject Index of the Modern Works added to the Library
of the British Museum in the years 1881-1900.** By
G. K. Fortescue. 3 vols., 1902-1904, £1, 10s. each
volume.

Ditto, 1901-1905. 1906, £2.

Ditto, 1906-1910. 1911, £2.

Excerpts from the General Catalogue :

* Academies.

Æsop, 1s. 6d.

Æschylus, 1s.

Aristotle, 2s.

Bible : Part I. Complete Bibles in all Languages, 4s.

Part II. Old Testament, 6s.

Part III. New Testament, 8s.

Appendix. Works upon the Bible, 6s.

Byron, 1s.

Cervantes, 1s. 6d.

Charles I., 1s. 6d.

Cicero, 2s.

* Columbus.

Dante, 2s.

* Defoe.

* Dryden.

Goethe, 1s.

Homer, 1s.

Horatius, 1s.

Jesuits, 6d.

Jesus Christ, 1s.

Liturgies, 10s. 6d.

Luther, Martin, 2s.

Milton, 9d.

* Napoleon.

Periodical Publications, 6 Parts, 4s. each. Index, 6s.

* Out of print.

Popes (Church of Rome), 2s.

Ptolemæus, 6d.

Scott, Sir Walter, 6d.

Shakespeare, 2s.

* Virgilius.

Rules for compiling the Catalogues in the Department of Printed Books in the British Museum. 1906, 1s.

Guide to the Use of the Reading-room. 1912, 6d.

3. *Music*

Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum.

By Augustus Hughes-Hughes. 3 vols., 1906-1909, £3, 13s. 6d. (Also sold separately.)

Catalogue of Printed Music published between 1487 and 1800, now in the British Museum. By W. Barclay Squire. 2 vols., 1912, £3, 3s.

4. *Maps*

Catalogue of the Printed Maps, Plans, and Charts in the British Museum. 1885. 2 vols, £6, 6s.

Excerpts: England, 1s. 6d. London, 2s. The World, 2s. 6d.

5. *Oriental*

Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium. Part I., 1838, 12s. Part II., 1847, 14s. Part II., ctd., 1852, 14s., Supplement, 1871, £2. Part III., 1847, 10s.

Catalogue of Syriac MSS. in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838. By W. Wright, LL.D. Part I., 1870, 15s. Part II., 1871, £1, 5s. Part III., 1873, £1, 10s.

Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshuni MSS. in the British Museum, acquired since 1873. By G. Margoliouth, 1899, 4s. 6d.

* Out of print.

Catalogue of the Coptic MSS. in the British Museum. By W. E. Crum, 1905, £4, 10s.

Catalogue of Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum. By W. Wright, LL.D., 1877, £1, 8s.

Catalogue of Persian MSS. in the British Museum. 3 vols., 1879, 1881, 1883, £1, 5s. each. Supplement, 1896, 15s.

Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan MSS. in the British Museum. By G. Margoliouth. Part I., 1900, £2, 7s. Part II., 1905, £3, 15s. Part III., Section 1, 1909, £1, 14s. Sections 2-7, 1912, £1, 15s.

Descriptive List of the Hebrew and Samaritan MSS. in the British Museum. By G. Margoliouth, 1893, 6s.

Catalogue of the Hebrew Books in the British Museum. 1867, £1, 5s. Supplement, 1894, £3.

Catalogue of the Sanskrit MSS. in the British Museum. 1903, £1, 10s.

Catalogue of the Sanskrit and Pali Books in the British Museum, 1876 (out of print). Supplements, 1893, £1, 16s. ; 1908, £3, 5s.

Catalogue of the Hindustani Books in the British Museum. 1889, 12s. Supplement, 1909, £2.

Catalogue of the Hindi, Panjab, and Hindustani MSS. in the British Museum. 1899, 15s.

Catalogue of the Chinese Books in the British Museum. 1877, £1. Supplement, 1903, £1, 4s.

Catalogue of the Japanese Printed Books and MSS. in the British Museum. By Sir R. K. Douglas, 1898, £1, 10s. Supplement, 1904, 10s.

Excerpts from Section 15 : *Delivery of Books to Libraries*

(1) The publisher of every book printed in the United Kingdom, shall, within one month after the publication,

deliver, at his own expense, a copy of the book to the trustees of the British Museum, who shall give a written receipt for it.

(2) He shall also, if written demand is made before the expiration of twelve months after publication deliver . . . to some dépôt in London named in the demand a copy of the book for, or in accordance with the directions of, the authority having the control of each of the following libraries, namely : The Bodleian Library, Oxford, the University Library, Cambridge, the Library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, and the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, and subject to the provisions of this section the National Library of Wales. . . .

(3) The copy delivered to the trustees of the British Museum shall be a copy of the whole book with all maps and illustrations belonging thereto, finished and coloured in the same manner as the best copies of the book are published, and shall be bound, sewed, or stitched together, and on the best paper on which the book is printed.

(4) The copy delivered for the other authorities mentioned in this section shall be on the paper on which the largest number of copies of the book is printed for sale and shall be in the like condition as the books prepared for sale.

(5) The books of which copies are to be delivered to the National Library of Wales shall not include books of such classes as may be specified in regulations to be made by the Board of Trade.

(6) If a publisher fails to comply with this section he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds and the value of the book, and the fine shall be paid to the trustees or authority to whom the book ought to have been delivered.

(7) For the purposes of this section the expression "book" . . . shall not include any second or subsequent edition of a book unless such edition contains alterations or additions. . . .

OUR LADY'S PEW AND COTTON HOUSE

“ Report of S. Travers, Surveyor General, to Sir Chr. Wren, on a reconsideration of their late report concerning the purchase of Cotton House and Gardens. Sir John Cotton derived his title to the messuage called Our Lady's Pew, and two gardens, by conveyances under a grant made by King James I. in his eleventh year to Robert Bowyer, Esq., and to a piece of waste ground lying beside the same, next the Thames, by similar conveyances, under a grant of the inheritance of the soil, houses, and gardens, of the old palace of Westminster, in the same eleventh year, but they took the whole to be subject to the Act of 12 William III. for settling and preserving the Cottonian Library. Their valuation made on a view of the whole premises and on consideration of what improvements might be made,” etc.—CALENDAR OF STATE PAPERS, Treasury Papers, xcvi. 102, 17th June 1706.

LETTER FROM DR JOHNSON TO MR F. A. BARNARD, KING'S LIBRARIAN

SIR,

28th May, 1768.

It is natural for a Scholar to interest himself in an expedition, undertaken, like yours, for the importation of literature; and therefore, though having never travelled myself, I am very little qualified to give advice to a traveller, yet, that I may not seem inattentive to a design so worthy of regard, I will try whether the present state of my health will suffer me to lay before you what observation or report have suggested to me, that may direct your enquiries, or facilitate your success. Things of which the mere rarity makes the value, and which are prized at a high rate by a wantonness rather than by use, are always passing from poorer to richer countries, and

therefore, though Germany and Italy were principally productive of Typographical curiosities, I do not much imagine, that they are now to be found there in great abundance. An eagerness for scarce books and early editions, which prevailed among the English about half a century ago, filled our shops with all the splendour and nicety of literature, and when the Harleian Catalogue was published, many of the books were bought for the library of the King of France.

I believe, however, that by the diligence with which you have enlarged the Library under your care, the present stock is so nearly exhausted, that till new purchases supply the booksellers with new stores, you will not be able to do much more than glean up single books, as accident shall produce them ; this, therefore, is the time for visiting the Continent.

What addition you can hope to make by ransacking other countries, we will now consider. English Literature you will not seek in any place but England. Classical Learning is diffused everywhere, and is not except by accident, more copious in one part of the polite world than in another. But every country has literature of its own, which may be best gathered in its native soil. . . .

Thus in Italy you may expect to meet with Canonists and Scholastic Divines, in Germany with Writers on the Feudal Laws, and in Holland with Civilians. The Schoolmen and Canonists must not be neglected, for they are useful to many purposes ; nor too anxiously sought, for their influence among us is much lessened by the Reformation. . . . But the Feudal and Civil Law I cannot but wish to see complete. The Feudal Constitution is the original of the law of property, over all the civilised part of Europe ; and the Civil Law, as it is generally understood to include the Law of Nations, may be called with great propriety a Regal study. Of these books, which have been often published, and diversified by various modes of impression, a Royal Library should have at least the most curious edition,

the most splendid, and the most useful. The most curious edition is commonly the first, and the most useful may be expected among the last. Thus of Tully's Offices the edition of Fust is the most curious, and that of Grævius the most useful. The most splendid, the eye will discern. With the old Printers you are now become well acquainted ; if you can find any collection of their productions to be sold, you will undoubtedly buy it, but this can scarcely be hoped, and you must catch up single volumes where you can find them. In every place things often occur where they are least expected. I was shown a Welsh grammar, written in Welsh, and printed at Milan, I believe, before any Grammar of that language had been printed here. Of purchasing entire Libraries, I know not whether the inconvenience may not overbalance the advantage. . . . It will generally be more commodious to buy the few that you want, at a price somewhat advanced, than to encumber yourself with useless books. But Libraries collected for particular studies will be very valuable acquisitions. The Collection of an eminent Civilian, Feudist, or Mathematician, will perhaps have very few superfluities. Topography or Local History prevail much in many parts of the Continent. I have been told that scarcely a village of Italy wants its historian. These books may be generally neglected, but some will deserve attention by the celebrity of the place, the eminence of the authors, or the beauty of the sculptures. . . . The old books with wooden cuts are to be diligently sought ; the designs were often made by great Masters, and the prints are such as cannot be made by any Artist now living. It will be of great use to collect in every place Maps of the adjacent country, and Plans of towns, buildings and gardens. . . . Of the celebrated Printers you do not need to be informed, and if you did, might consult Baillet, *Jugemens des Scavans*. The productions of Aldus are enumerated in the *Bibliotheca Græca*. . . . The great ornaments of a Library, furnished

for magnificence as well as use, are the First editions, of which, therefore, I would not willingly neglect the mention. You know, Sir, that the Annals of Typography begin with the Codex, 1457, but there is great reason to believe, that there are latent, in obscure corners, books printed before it. . . .

There prevails among Typographical Antiquaries a vague opinion, that the Bible had been printed three times before the edition of 1462, which Calmet calls "La premiere Edition bien averée." One of these editions has been lately discovered in a Convent, and transplanted into the French King's Library. Another copy has likewise been found, but I know not whether of the same impression or another. These discoveries are sufficient to raise hope and instigate enquiry. In the purchase of old books, let me recommend you to enquire with great caution whether they are perfect. In the first edition the loss of a leaf is not easily observed. You remember how near we both were to purchasing a mutilated Missal at a high price.

All this perhaps you know already, and therefore my letter may be of no use. I am, however, desirous to show you, that I wish prosperity to your undertaking. One advice more I will give, of more importance than all the rest, of which I, therefore, hope you will have still less need. You are going into a part of the world divided, as it is said, between Bigotry and Atheism : such representations are always hyperbolical, but there is certainly enough of both to alarm any mind solicitous for Piety and Truth ; let not the contempt of Superstition precipitate you into Infidelity, or the horror of Infidelity ensnare you in Superstition. I sincerely wish you successful and happy, for

I am, Sir,
Your affectionate humble servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.

May 28, 1768.
To F. A. BARNARD, Esq.

XV

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acts of Parliament :

- 1 Richard III., c. 9 (allowing the importation of books).
- 25 Henry VIII., c. 15 (forbidding the importation of books).
- 14 Charles II., c. 33. For Preventing the frequent Abuses in Printing seditious, treasonable, and unlicensed Books and Pamphlets, and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses.
- 12 & 13 William III., c. 7. For the better settling and preserving the Library kept in the House at Westminster called Cotton House . . . for the Benefit of the Publick.
- 6 Anne, c. 30. For the better securing Her Majesty's purchase of Cotton House in Westminster.
- 8 Anne, c. 21. For the Encouragement of Learning.

Subsequent Copyright Acts :

- 26 George II., c. 22. For the Purchase of the Museum or Collection of Sir Hans Sloane and of the Harleian collection of Manuscripts, and for providing one General Repository for the better reception and more convenient Use of the said Collections; and of the Cottonian Library, and of the Additions thereto.

A Decree of Starre Chamber concerning Printing. 1637.
Calendars of State Papers.

Parliamentary Papers :

Report from the Committee appointed to view the Cottonian Library, 1732.

Report of the Committee on Papers relating to the Royal Library, 1823.

Report from the Select Committee on the condition, management, and affairs of the British Museum, 1835-6.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the constitution and government of the British Museum, 1850.

British Museum Returns, 1827-1915.

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Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum [first edition]. 1808.

Panizzi, A. Report to the Trustees on the Printed Books. 1845.

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Anon. A View of the British Museum. [1760 ?]

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